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# the TRAVELLERS' Digest

VLAND!

Adventure Number 5 $3.95

## The First Imperium

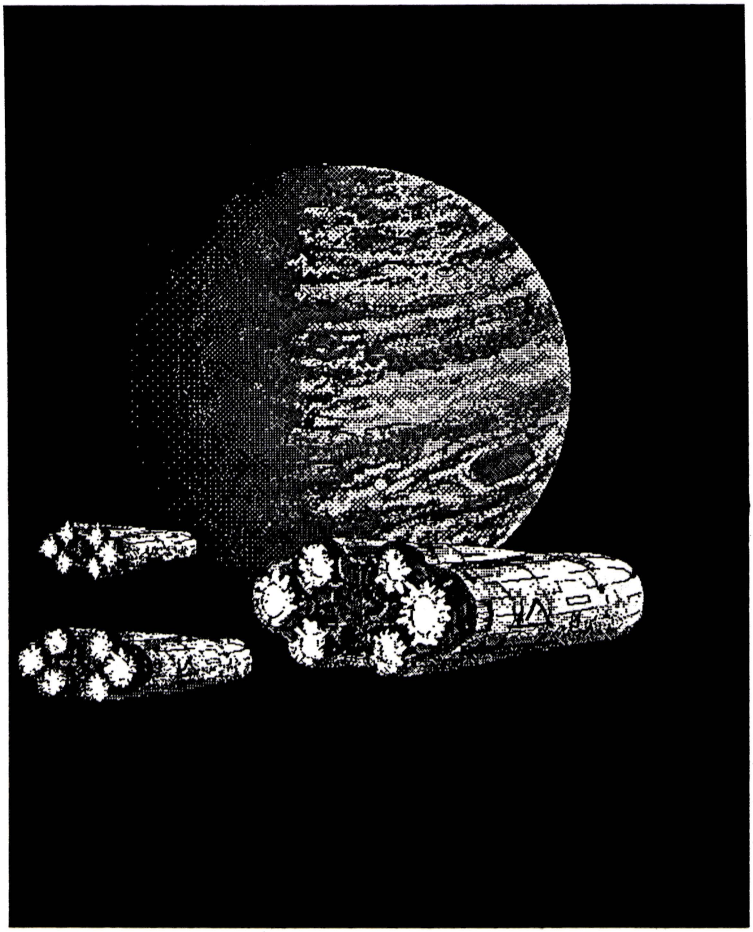
by Marc W. Miller

## The Humaniti Experiment

FEATURE ADVENTURE

The quarterly adventure magazine devoted to GDW's Game of the Far Future, *Traveller*®

Digest Group Publications



*"...Vland, the home of the first great race of starfaring humans. The Vilani roamed the galaxy unchallenged for millennia—what great discoveries did they make that have been lost in the dark mists of the distant past?"*

— Akidda Laagiir, from 'On Vland' in *The Travellers' Digest,* 1102

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# The Travellers' Digest

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# Editor's Digest

Happy First Birthday, *Travellers' Digest*! We still remember those of you who cautiously approached our booth in Baltimore at ORIGINS 85. Some of you wanted to buy our Charter Issue, but you were afraid to pay for a whole subscription for fear that we would go out of business and you would never see another magazine. A quick look at this issue (especially in comparison with our earlier efforts) should quickly put that fear to rest.

We've completely sold out Issues 1 and 2, and our circulation has grown over the last year to five times what it was for our Charter Issue.

We began our magazine life as a 52-page magazine "devoted to GDW's science fiction adventure game, **Traveller**". We're still a 52-page magazine, but sometimes we outdo ourselves. Thanks to advertising revenue, we can afford to print 60 pages of Traveller excitement in this issue. Subtract the three pages of ads and you'll find we've grown five pages over the last year, and put some color on our cover besides.

This "extra" magazine is yours at no additional cost, because of our advertisers. If you like getting a fatter *Travellers' Digest* each quarter, support these advertisers, and they'll keep paying for your "extra" pages of adventure. For our part, we promise never to reduce the amount of Traveller excitement you get because of advertisements.

Even with the extra space, it was all we could do to make this issue fit between its covers. Marc W. Miller and J. Andrew Keith introduce you to Vland in a way no other Traveller writers could. In order to bring you these pieces in their full form in one issue, we have pre-empted "The Gaming Digest" and "Traveller Tech Briefs" for this issue only.

What's next? Those of you who have travelled with our four characters over the last year have seen a lot of excitement—but you ain't seen nothin' yet! Next issue's feature adventure, "The Most Valuable Prey", should keep your trigger-fingers itching for answers. Issue 7 brings you "The Fourth Imperium"—and that's all we're saying about it for now.

Issue 8 lands the characters at Shudusham for a quiet, peaceful, relaxing visit to its well-known Robotics Conference. And in Issue 9, we reach Capital. Will all four knights meet Emperor Strephon face to face? Will all four want to?

One of our advertisers in this issue is Seeker, a new firm publishing 15mm and 25mm plans for science fiction games. We've looked over some of their stuff and it looks pretty good. They're worth looking into.

We're tooting our own horns for two new Traveller products to be released at ORIGINS 86 in Los Angeles (July 3-6). *Grand Survey*, the ultimate in world exploration and mapping, will be published by us. See our ad in this issue for more info. *Robots: Book 8* expands Traveller rules to include generation and encounter systems for robots, complete with information on their use by every major race in explored space. *Robots* will be published by GDW.

Drop by our booth at ORIGINS 86, and we'll be glad to autograph a copy of each book for you. If you can't make it to LA in July, just make sure your dealer knows you want both of these new products.

While at ORIGINS 86, we'll be putting on a couple seminars, and participating in a panel discussion. One of these seminars is called "Traveller Potpourri". It will include some goodies we just can't do in the magazine.

For those of you who enjoyed the article on the Gvegh language, we'll have handouts with a completely detailed grammar—and some short lessons on pronunciation. We'll also let you expand the stats of a world in *Atlas of the Imperium*, using *Grand Survey*. When we're done, we'll print the info generated in a future issue of *The Travellers' Digest*, so you can see your work—officially approved by GDW—in print.

If you're serious about Traveller, you need to read *The Travellers' Digest* regularly. As shown by our index for last year, we printed new, official stats on well over 100 worlds in the Imperium and along its borders. In our first three issues, we gave you a headstart on some of the new info to be published (in greatly expanded form) in *Robots*. (AB-101 was the first player character robot in a published Traveller adventure.) We detailed more high-tech equipment than most characters can afford to buy. And we always kept you adventuring, with a complete adventure in every issue, and library data for worlds of adventure besides.

Don't miss out on any of this in our second year. Pester your dealer if he doesn't carry us yet on his shelves, or subscribe at our money-saving rates. •

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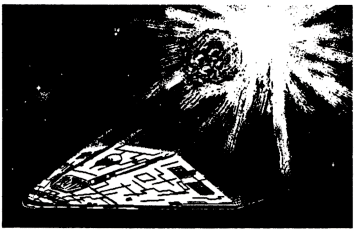
Here's the main DGP staff. From left to right are: Kristie Fields, Gary Thomas, Patty Fugate, Joe Fugate, Nancy Parker, and Bob Parker. This picture was digitized using a video camera and stored in a computer file on one of the Macintoshes we use here at DGP for doing the magazine.

# The Humaniti Experiment

## FEATURE ADVENTURE



*The Humaniti Experiment* tells of a group of four travellers as they travel to world of Vland and learn of a bizarre experiment conducted on the human race thousands of years ago. It is assumed that this adventure will be administered by a referee who has read through it, and who is familiar with both this adventure and the rules for Traveller. The basic Traveller rules are all that is required. Paper, pencils, and six-sided dice are needed; square-grid graph paper and a calculator are helpful.

**Optional References:** Additional helpful information may be found in:

- Boxed Module, *Beltstrike*
- Alien Module 6, *Solomani*
- Supplement 8, *Library Data (A-M)*
- Supplement 11, *Library Data (N-Z)*
- *The Atlas of the Imperium*

The only background information required for this adventure is contained in this issue of *The Travellers' Digest.*

**Chapters:** This adventure is in several chapters, most of which are material to be read only by the referee.

This introduction may be read by both the players and the referee.

The chapter *"An Old and Dangerous Foe"* introduces the characters and the situation. This section is designed to be read to the players in order to acquaint them with the characters and their personalities.

The rest of the adventure is for the referee only; players may discover its secrets only by playing the adventure.

## STANDARDS AND ASSUMPTIONS

This adventure takes place in the universe published and described by a multitude of **Traveller** products.

The Imperium is a huge human-dominated stellar empire thirty centuries in the future. It encompasses several hundred light-years of our segment of the Milky Way galaxy.

The Vland Sector is a 32 by 40 parsec (1 parsec = 3.26 light-years) area of the Imperium near the Imperial frontier. A sector is divided into sixteen administrative areas called subsectors. Each subsector is 8 by 10 parsecs in size.

A world is commonly listed with its name followed by a slash and the name of its subsector location. For example, Tauri/Vland refers to the world *Tauri* in the *Vland* subsector.

**Dates**: All dates herein correspond to the Imperial calendar. The starting date of this adventure is 005-1102.

**Place**: This adventure starts on board the Tukera Lines ship, *Shudi's Paradise,* en route between Centra/Kagamira (Vland 1414) and the world Vland.

## CHARACTERS

This adventure is intended for the characters listed. Feel free to change any or all of the genders as desired. Additional background information for these characters can be found in other issues of *The Travellers' Digest.*

**Akidda Laagiir, journalist** 858AAB Age 43 6 terms Cr 28,000
Born: 319-1058 on Mora/Mora
Interview-5, Streetwise-3, Grav Vehicle-1, Wheeled Vehicle-1, Admin-1, Brawling-1 Possessions: TL 15 Holocrystal Recorder

*Position:* Current recipient of the *Travellers' Digest* Touring Award.

Akidda Laagiir started at the age of eighteen as a copy boy with the *Mora World Review;* his friendly face and his ability to get people to trust him contributed to his steady career progress. Living on Mora, with its charismatic dictator, the Duchess Delphine the Matriarch, is sometimes a trying experience for any journalist, which may explain his occasionally iconoclastic actions. He is slightly prejudiced against "the system", preferring fresh ideas and fresh ways of doing things.

His admin skill was learned while moving up the ranks, but it is a skill that he would just as soon not need: he much prefers cutting through to the heart of a situation. While he is sensitive to the needs of others, he has a well developed self-preservation instinct that allows him to quickly adapt to strange locales and cultures—a skill that has saved his neck many times.

Akidda's most prominent skill is his interviewing ability. By his knowledge of psychology, body language, and oral communication, he has a good chance of discerning someone's feelings and drawing him out.

Akidda Laagiir received the *Travellers' Digest* Touring Award for his article on the role of the spinward frontier sectors in shaping the growth of the Imperium in the next 1000 years.

**Dur Telemon, ex-scout** B7A85B Age 34 3 terms Cr 65,000
Born: 038-1067 on Mora/Mora
Auto Pistol-3, Survival-2, Pilot-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Engineer-1, Gambling-1, Brawling-1 Possessions: Auto Pistol

Dur Telemon was *born* into the Scout service. His father was in the Scout service while Dur was growing up, and both of his grandfathers served in the Scouts in their younger days. Dur enjoyed nothing more as a boy than to sit and listen to their tales of adventure. The Fourth Frontier War broke out when Dur was a teenager—his father's service in the war was a source of pride for the entire family.

Dur's individualistic nature meshed well with his duties in the Exploration Office of the Scout Service. In his first term, a "routine" mapping expedition on Pannet/Rhylanor suddenly turned into a hostage rescue operation, and it was then that Dur happened to save Dr. Krenstein's life.

The harsh conditions Dur often encountered taught him much about staying alive and living off the land in exotic environments.

Dur has resigned from the Scouts and is travelling with his uncle, Akidda Laagiir.

**Dr. Theodor Krenstein, scientist** 495FCB Age 59 10 terms Cr 300,000
Born: 173-1042 on Rhylanor/Rhylanor

Computer-4, Leader-3, JOT-2, Laser Rifle-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Electronics-1, Medical-1, Mechanical-1

Possessions: Hand Computer (TL15), Electronic Tool Kit, Robot AB-101

*Position:* Graz Redniz Chair of Computational Robotics at Rhylanor Institute of Technology on Rhylanor/Rhylanor (on sabbatical leave).

Dr. Theodor Krenstein is a gifted, multi-talented scientist, with interests ranging from anthropology and archaeology to xenology and zoology, including most of the "ologies" in between. He holds advanced degrees in computer science and robotics.

After three terms as Dean of the School of Robotic Science at the Rhylanor Institute of Technology, he was appointed to the Graz Redniz Chair of Computational Robotics, a prestigious and coveted position. He has to his credit 12 books, over 100 articles in technical and scientific journals, and holds more than 250 Imperial patents for his inventions and computer work. Despite this, he has become bored with academic life, and realizing his age, he has taken an extended sabbatical in order to make forays into other parts of the Imperium.

During a test of Scout survey robots in 1090 on Pannet/Rhylanor, members of a disgruntled anti-technist group kidnapped Dr. Krenstein and threatened to kill him if the Scout service didn't meet their demands. A young scout named Dur Telemon was part of the all-volunteer raiding team that finally freed Dr. Krenstein; in fact, Dur was the first to reach the Doctor.

In the following year, Dr. Krenstein constructed his personal servant and bodyguard, AB-101.

**Aybee Wan Owen, valet** FD9C7B Age 19(?) 0 terms Cr 0
Constructed: 1091 on Rhylanor/Rhylanor

Medic-1, Linguist-1, Vehicle-1, Laser Welder-1

*Position:* Personal servant and protégé of Dr. Theodor Krenstein.

AB-101, affectionately known as "Aybee", is a pseudo-biological robot designed and constructed by Dr. Krenstein. His UPP, skill levels, and other personal data are approximations, calculated by comparing human norms with Aybee's abilities. Although his programming gives him certain basic abilities, because of his lack of true artificial intelligence he can make errors in judgment; in abstract situations, this effectively lowers his true skill level.

Aybee's "weapon" is a light laser welder, built into his right arm. Dr. Krenstein has designed Aybee in such a way that his arm (ostensibly used only as a tool) can pass inspection by officials, since laser welders are not restricted by local law levels; however, voice override controls allow Dr. Krenstein to use

Aybee as a weapon at short range.

Because Dr. Krenstein ordinarily conceals Aybee's true nature, Aybee was mistakenly granted knighthood in the Order of the Emperors' Guard along with the others, after certain events on Jode/Pretoria. Such an occurrence would be most humiliating to the emperor, so it has become imperative that Aybee's "true identity" not become a matter of public knowledge.

## THE UNIVERSAL TASK PROFILE

In all our adventures we use the UNIVERSAL TASK PROFILE or **UTP,** which provides you with all the information you need about a task to be performed. Using the UTP you can quickly roll for a task attempt and know:

- the relative difficulty of the task;
- which skills and character attributes are useful;
- if the task is hazardous;
- how long the task attempt takes;
- if you can retry the task in the event of an unsuccessful attempt;
- if a mishap occurred while attempting the task.

In addition, you can:

- rapidly determine the effects of a mishap;
- discern the extent of the damage;
- know what tasks are needed to proceed with repairs.

In short, the UTP system provides a comprehensive and playable framework for defining and attempting tasks. We encourage you to make liberal use of it. A complete summary of the UTP procedures is on pages 12 and 13.

Arkika Khamur BA7775 Age 38 5 terms Cr50,000
SMG-4, Prospecting-3, Vacc Suit-2, Pilot-1 Seeker

Khamur's prospecting has been moderately successful for most of his career; however, he is anxious to get rich and is not succeeding. He got involved with the SPT in his teens and has had paramilitary training at a secret camp. His motives are partly racial bigotry and partly a hope of being higher up in the SPT social order. In his early thirties his legs were crushed in a space accident and he nearly died; he spent several months in the hospital.

Adar Teque 779885 Age 20 1 term Cr2,000
Vacc Suit-1, Electronic-0

Teque has been Khamur's partner for six months. He is completely ignorant of Khamur's plans but all too aware of his views; Khamur has been trying to convince him to join the SPT cause and Teque is getting sick of it. He would really like to get into the Scouts.

Isaac Imlu 4C69B9 Age 59 10 terms Cr26,500
Cultural Anthropology-5, Linguistics-4, Computer-2, Admin-2, Biology-1, Physics-1

Imlu met Krenstein at the University of Rhylanor in an undergraduate literature class. They became friends despite their different specialties at RIT, and they have maintained occasional correspondence since. Imlu's doctoral thesis was on the psychological meaning of the forms different races choose to see as constellations. He is fluent in Vilani, Old High Vilani, Aslan and Vargr as well as Galanglic.

(Isaac Imlu was generated using the Imperial Academy of Science and Medicine system by Jeff Groteboer in *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* #22.)

Leshan Bezi 783BCA Age 34 4 terms Cr10,000
Electronic-5, Computer-3

Bezi is the hardware expert in Imlu's section of the Encyclopedia. He has been with them since he began working while finishing college. He is a specialist in First Imperium data storage technology.

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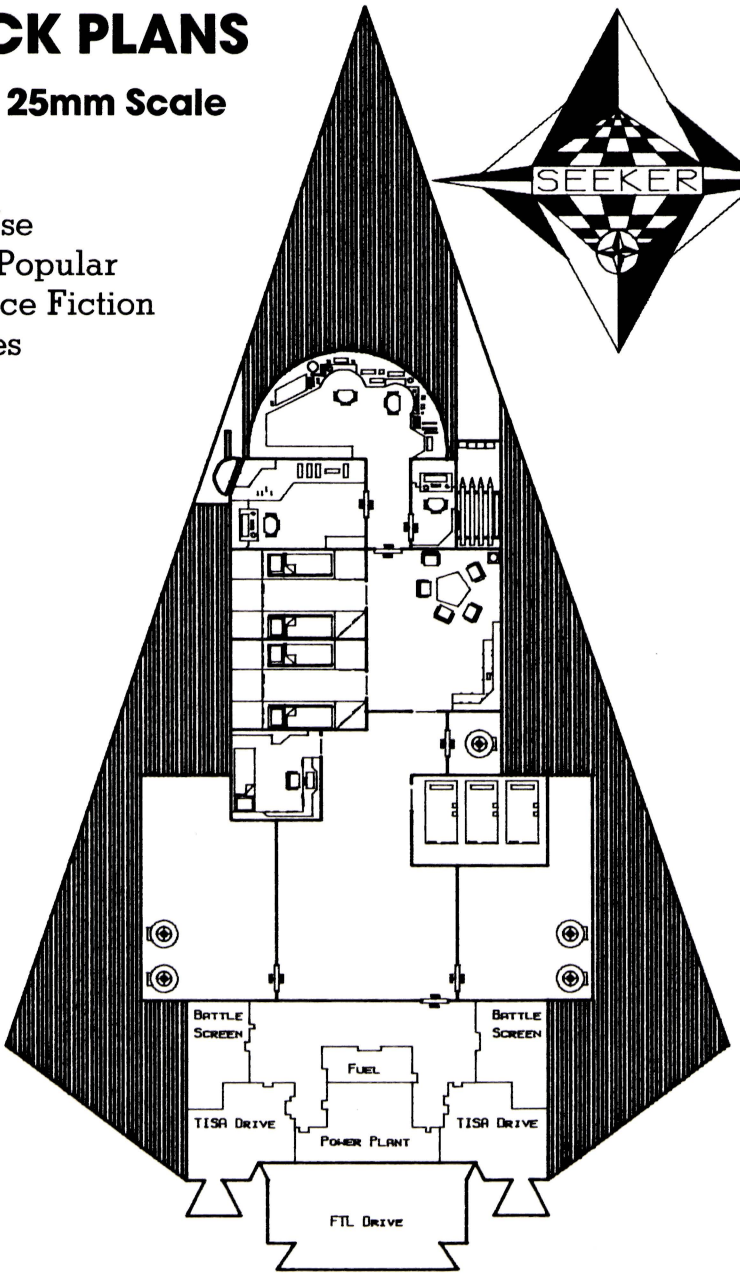


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# UTP: Universal Task Profile—handling tasks in *Traveller*

FORMAT: To repair major damage to an Air/Raft:

DIFFICULT, gravitics, edu, 15 min.

**Difficulty (2D)**

add to roll

**DMs**

subtract from roll

**Time (3D)**

**Difficulty...**Roll 2D for success. The success roll needed for each difficulty level is shown on the DIFFICULTY table, below.
For example, a roll of 11+ is needed to succeed at a DIFFICULT task.

**DMs...***Add* to difficulty roll (improves chances)
*Subtract* from time roll (shortens task duration)
DMs are typically listed as *crucial skill(s)* and *crucial characteristic(s)* (represents skill(s) and characteristic(s) judged most crucial to task success).
•*crucial skill(s):* use skill level as DM.
•*crucial characteristic(s):* characteristic÷ 5 (drop fractions; DM range is 0 to 3).
E.g.,gravitics-3 (skill DM of 3) and edu 9 (charactistic DM of 1) = total DM of 4.
*NOTES:* **If no skill** (not even skill level-0) in the crucial skill, make task harder (at least DIFFICULT, perhaps even IMPOSSIBLE). Ref's option: (int + edu)÷5 can substitute for lack of skill (represents all the intellect, knowledge, and experience brought to bear); or use a related skill (at a handicapped level).
**If a task is hazardous**, it should be declared as such. Hazardous tasks have a higher risk of mishap when unsuccessful.
**If a hasty attempt is desired**, make task harder (at least ROUTINE, perhaps even IMPOSSIBLE); double DMs before subtracting from time roll (hasty attempt takes less time).

**Time...**Task is assumed to take an average of ten UTP time periods.
The actual time duration of the task attempt (successful or not) is:
TIME x (3D - DMs) (absolute minimum is 3 time periods)
E.g., a roll of 14 (with a DM of 4 subtracted from the roll) would give a modified roll of 10. For a UTP time period of 15 min., the duration would be 150 minutes (2.5 hours). The absolute minimum would be 45 minutes.
*NOTES:* **If time is omitted** from the UTP, the task is assumed to be instant.

## UTP Procedure Summary

when attempt fails → when mishap →

| *Die* | *Difficulty* | *Failure* | *Mishap* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Automatic Failure | reroll | reroll |
| 3+ | SIMPLE | retry | SUPERFICIAL (1D) |
| 7+ | ROUTINE | check determination | MINOR (2D) |
| 11+ | DIFFICULT | Mishap (2D) | MAJOR (3D) |
| 15+ | FORMIDABLE | Mishap (3D) | DESTROYED (4D) |

**Failed Task Attempts...**
*Ordinary Task:* roll 2D on the FAILURE table, above.
*Hazardous Task:* roll 3D on the FAILURE table, above.
***Failure table results:***
**Retry:** failed task, but can retry with no penalty.
**Check determination:** failed task, and must stay determined to retry the task without penalty. Staying determined is a special task which has a UTP of:
DIFFICULT, end, int (end + int represents character's force of will)
• if successful at staying determined, can retry the failed task with no penalty;
• if not successful at staying determined, have two choices...
1. retry immediately, but task difficulty increases *one* level
2. retry task at no increase in difficulty by waiting 10 times the duration of the failed task *before* retrying.

*NOTES:* **a FORMIDABLE task** increased in difficulty becomes IMPOSSIBLE, i.e. failure is permanent: no more retries are possible until circumstances change enough to allow a new UTP to be defined for the task.
**JOT skill** provides one free retry per level of skill (represents character's resourcefulness).
**Mishap (2D):** failed the task, roll 2D on the MISHAP table, above. After correcting the effects of the accident, the task reverts to check determination, should a retry be desired.
**Mishap (3D):** as above, except roll 3D on the MISHAP table.
***Mishap table Results:***
**SUPERFICIAL(1D):** Impose superficial damage on a device or vehicle and/or 1D wounds at random.
**MINOR(2D):** As above, except impose minor damage and/or 2D wounds.
**MAJOR(3D):** As above, except impose major damage and/or 3D wounds.
**DESTROYED(4D):** As above, except destroyed damage and/or 4D wounds.

**Damage and Repair**

| *Damage Level* | *Operate?* | *Repair Task (shop)* | *Repair Cost (shop)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| SUPERFICIAL | Yes | SIMPLE | 1D% of new price |
| MINOR | No | ROUTINE | 1Dx1D% of new price |
| MAJOR | No | DIFFICULT | 2Dx 5% of new price |
| DESTROYED | No | FORMIDABLE | 2Dx 2Dx 5% of new price |

*To perform repairs:* diagnose the problem—the standard diagnosis difficulty is ROUTINE; the referee must determine DMs & time. Once the diagnosis has succeeded (required to proceed with repairs), perform the repair task using the difficulty as indicated, above. Optionally, when in the shop, repairs can be made without successful diagnosis at an additional cost multiplier of 1D (just replace the entire assembly if you don't know what's wrong).
*NOTES:* **For repairs in the field** (away from shop facilities of an adequate TL) increase the task difficulty *one* level. **Lack of tools,** increase difficulty *one* level; **Lack of spare parts,** increase difficulty *one* level.
**Any task involving a vehicle or device with MAJOR damage** that was repaired in the field is *hazardous* (high risk of accidental breakdown). This lasts until the original MAJOR damage is totally repaired in the shop.

**Special Cases...** A UTP may immediately be followed by a paragraph labeled REFEREE which lists any special conditions that apply to the task attempt.
E.g., REFEREE: This task is NON-REPEATABLE; only one attempt allowed.

The UTP system is designed to be comprehensive, but not overly complex. After using the system a while, you should find it easy to remember and use.

# AN OLD AND DANGEROUS FOE

"Hold still, Aybee, this won't hurt a bit."

"Of course not, Dr. Krenstein."

Aybee sat on the edge of the bed with his shirt off. The older man opened a small kit and glanced over the array of tools inside. Choosing one, he deftly placed it against Aybee's chest, which made a soft pinging noise as the magno-bolts released. In a few moments the access plate was off and Dr. Krenstein uncoiled a length of data wire. He methodically plugged one end into his hand computer, attaching the other end to the small matching holes in Aybee's chest just beneath the left arm.

A knock came at the door.

"Who is it?" the doctor called.

"It's me, Doc." Dur Telemon's voice blared through the intercom speaker.

"Come on in, Dur," the doctor said as he pressed the door switch on the desk beside him.

"Hey, Doc, what's going on? Is Aybee sick?"

Aybee and the doctor laughed. "No, Dur, he's not sick. He just made a mistake, that's all."

Dur's brows furrowed. "I don't get it, Doc. If Aybee's a computer, how can he make a mistake?"

"You're too used to having Aybee around, Dur, so sometimes you think of him only as my companion. You should remember that Aybee is my most important research project. I'm studying the limits of what's called 'synaptic memory', and the only time I get results from this experiment is when Aybee makes a mistake."

"Then what are you doing now? Fixing the mistake?"

"Not exactly, Dur. I have Aybee's brain interface connected to my hand computer and I'm transferring part of his memory into it. That way I have a record of what went wrong and I can study it at my leisure. Aybee rarely makes a mistake, so I am grateful for any that come along."

"So whenever Aybee goofs up, he tells you about it so you can do this?" Dur asked.

"No, Dur, the only way I know Aybee has erred is if I see him do it. The reason these mistakes are so significant is that Aybee doesn't know he's made them."

Dur wrinkled his face a little more and rubbed his chin. "Now that Aybee's on the blink, Doc, the only guy I know who's never made a mistake is you."

Krenstein ignored the compliment. "I wouldn't say Aybee's 'on the blink', Dur. It's just that he occasionally forgets something, or remembers something incorrectly. Do you remember that conversation we had yesterday, about how the Zurrians raise surshi cloth?"

"Sure. What about it?"

"Aybee doesn't remember the conversation at all."

Dur scowled again. "I don't see why that matters, Doc."

Krenstein paused for a moment before speaking. "I'll try to put this in

layman's terms, Dur. In constructing Aybee, I've tried some new methods of storing data in order to maximize the capacity and reliability of synaptic storage, so whenever I encounter one of these anomalous events, it's important that it be subjected to an exhaustive analysis so that my algorithm can be improved. If Aybee—"

"Just a minute, Doc." Dur held up his hand. "I still don't understand what difference it makes if Aybee doesn't remember. He wasn't even at that conversation."

"What?"

Dur grinned. "Kidd and I were there, and Aybee was for awhile, but you sent him to your stateroom to get something. He missed what we said about the surshi cloth."

Krenstein looked over at Aybee, still wired in to his hand computer. "This is disappointing, Dur."

"I'll say it is, Doc. One of my heroes, shot down in flames. I guess everybody makes mistakes, but I never figured on you making one."

A sudden rapping sounded at the door. "Krenstein, it's me—open up!"

Dur opened the door to his uncle, Akidda Laagiir. Akidda's face looked flushed and his eyes were open wide, and when he spoke, his voice was low and fast. "You remember the leader of that Zhodani spy ring? I just saw him."

"What? Here, on the ship? Did he see you?" Dur hadn't had this kind of excitement in a while.

## PLAYING CAT AND MOUSE

A quick review may be in order here. In the *Travellers' Digest* Adventure 1, the four characters went looking for one of Dur's friends, who worked on an express boat at Jode/Pretoria in Deneb sector. To make a long story short, the friend had been captured and replaced by a Zhodani operative with forged identity papers and a unique psionic talent.

In the course of the adventure, the characters managed to break up the Zhodani spy ring, for which they were knighted into the Order of the Emperor's Guard. The entire incident is classified as an Imperial secret.

Unfortunately for the Imperium and the characters, the leader of the spy ring is still at large. Operating a casino under the alias of Whocco Tehn, this powerful Zhodani noble got away before officials could react.

Depending on how your own players handled the adventure, some of the characters may have seen Whocco Tehn in person in his casino. Assume that the other characters saw holographic pictures of him during the Imperial investigation after the spy ring was quashed.

Akidda has now caught a glimpse of a man who looked like the Zhodani. Use the long-liner ship plans from Issue 4, or make some up for the occasion. Play this introduction as you see fit. As it turns out, everyone but Dur has made a mistake so far. The man that Akidda saw is not Whocco Tehn, as a close-up examination will immediately show.

Once this is over, the players should be raring to go on the real adventure, which starts on Vland.

## ARRIVAL INSYSTEM

After the characters arrive on Vland, don't be in a hurry to push your players into the main part of the adventure. If they are enjoying other tourist sights, let them take their time.

After all, Vland is a world with 37 billion inhabitants and a civilization spanning 15,000 years, so there is a lot to see here. The articles *The First Imperium* and *Vland!* provide useful background for this adventure.

Vland is a very rank-conscious planet. Use DM +2 for reactions whenever players remember to introduce themselves by title.

## THE TOURIST'S GUIDE TO VLAND

*Founders of the Empire Planetary Monument*

One of the peaks in the Ashkige Range, standing apart from the surrounding mountains, has carved into its sheer face a massive bas relief of the First Triumvirate, the founders of the consolidated Ziru Sirka. The tallest figure stands holding five stars in his hand. The other two members of the Triumvirate stand supporting the tallest figure's arms. By any world's standards, this is an impressive monument.

*Ziru Sirka Imperial Palace*

Almost all of the buildings in this complex are maintained as a historical museum of the First Imperium. One exception is used today as the Ducal Palace; another houses the chambers and offices of the Vilani Council of 300, chosen from the top echelons of the govenment by the Grand Duke of Vland.

*Heroes of Vland Planetary Monument*

A beautiful tour takes visitors down the winding River of Heroes starting from the desert oasis headwaters of the river. As the air/raft travels down the river, large statues and monuments commemorating great heroes of Vland can be seen on either side.

As a raft pulls abreast of a monument, the tour operator can trigger a holo-recording display of the main events and accomplishments of that particular hero or heroine's life.

*Ziru Sirka Imperial Library of Enlugal*

This library is the oldest continuously open in explored space, and well worth a visit. Not only is the amount and quality of the knowledge stored in various forms a wonder, but the museums, the seminars, the research facilities, even the architecture of the complex, combine to produce an overwhelming whole.

*"The Encyclopedia"*

The Vilani name of this institution, Argushiigi Admegulasha Bilanidin, can be literally translated as the "Vilani Repository of All Knowledge". Either name is cumbersome, even for an enterprise of this scope. Most locals refer to it as either the AAB or just "the Encyclopedia".

The AAB is a museum, library, research center, and publishing house rolled into one. Not only does it collect samples and written materials from all over the explored area of the galaxy, but it also publishes an encyclopedia known as the Argushiigi Admegulasha Bilanidin. The fifteen holocrystals making up the encyclopedia contain the equivalent of 7500 books, yet the crystals easily fit in a large pocket.

In many ways the AAB is a clearing house for Imperium-wide copyrights and patents. Its giant database is freely available to scholars and researchers who come to Vland. The personnel and resources of the AAB also form the backbone of the faculty and learning materials of Kasiiga University.

Located in the city of Ishimaga, the AAB is the largest museum and library in explored space.


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# AT THE ENCYCLOPEDIA

One of Dr. Krenstein's priorities on Vland might be to see his old friend, Issac Imlu, at the AAB. The others of the group may want to go along, or they might wish to go see other things. Krenstein and the others will spend time doing other things around the planet, of course. Visiting this friend may take place on a trip that is spent primarily on other things, or vice versa.

When the characters eventually get to the Encyclopedia, Dr. Imlu is more than delighted to see Dr. Krenstein. He and his noble friends will be given the red carpet treatment. The entire group will be invited on a tour which will include sections of the AAB off limits to the general public.

While Dr. Imlu is showing the party around, they are approached by a man with broad shoulders and thin legs, a physique sometimes seen in belters. "Say, ain't you Doc Imlu?" he asks. "I was looking for you at your office, but your desk robot wouldn't let me in. I guess it was 'cause you were out here."

"Anyway, my name's Arkika Khamor, and I want to know what this is worth." So saying, he reaches inside his jacket and takes out a small, flat square of green and white plastic.

Dr. Imlu whistles. "Sir Theodor, do you recognize this?"

The object is not one that Dr. Krenstein or anyone else in the party is familiar with. Dr. Imlu sees that the device is a very old First Imperium data disk, perhaps dating from as far back as two or three thousand years ago.

The belter's main concern for the disk is its value to him personally. Dr. Imlu's interest is the value of the disk to history, if the disk is indeed genuine. The two NPCs are bound to bicker back and forth about the item, of course. It is your job as referee to ensure that the player characters are included in this discussion.

The belter says that he has been referred to Dr. Imlu as a person who might be able to tell him what it could be sold for.

Dr. Imlu will of course want to know where the disk came from . The belter is very reluctant to tell him: "Hey, I found this, and I don't want everybody jumping my claim! I need to make some money out of this! If I tell anyone, then everybody will try to steal it away from me!"

As Dr. Imlu insists on knowing more about how and where it was found, eventually the belter will say more. The disk is one of several that he found at Star Harbor. The other disks, he says, are hidden where "not even a curious Hiver would look." None of the characters recognizes the name "Star Harbor".

The belter will try to evade any other inquiries about the source of the disk, but if the characters are persistent he will finally explain. Bribes will help more than threats here. (If your players are asleep at the wheel, you may have to use Dr. Imlu to drag the story out of the belter.)

Use the material in "The Belter's Story" for this, but don't just read the story to your players. Make them work to get it.

After he has heard the belter's story, Dr. Imlu will tell him that the library will have to keep the disk for a while, to read the information on it before Dr. Imlu can give the belter an appraisal of its value.

The belter hesitates at this, but then consents to leave it with Dr. Imlu for two or three days. Before he leaves, he tells Imlu, "If you can get me a good price, I might even sell the disks to you. By the way, if you need to get hold of me, I'll be at the Monte Vista Towers. Just ask for Arkika Khamur." Before the belter gets away, he will remember to ask Dr. Imlu for a receipt.

## THE BELTER'S STORY

"Me and my partner were working in the Star Harbor system and not doing too well, you know, so we moved to a new clump of rocks and started surveying. We got some real funny readings like a metal rock but hollow. When we went over to it , it was a ship drifting in orbit. It had one hole where it must have been hit with a big rock, but it was pretty much all right. Probes said it was powered down and nobody aboard.

Well, a salvage job could up our income a lot, you know, or a finder's fee. Who did it belong to? I don't know. A big marking on it matched this triangle shape on the disk, and it had a bunch of weird writing on it, too. It looked real old to me, lots of pitting and scratching.

"We tried the air locks and they opened right off. It was all vacuum inside, nobody aboard. Lots of dust on every surface, dark gray." (*Referee:* This is allegedly all that would remain of bodies exposed to vacuum for thousands of years, after all volatiles had boiled away. Don't suggest this unless players question it. The belter does not know this.)

"There were still a few lights on inside, too—I thought on emergency power levels. Adar went down to engineering to see if we could power up and bring her in on her own. I stayed up on the bridge and looked for some ID. It didn't look like any ship's bridge I ever saw. I looked around for the security lockers, and I forced one open with some of these things in it. I wasn't sure what they were, but I thought one of them might be the ship's log, so I stuffed probably two or three hundred of 'em into my sample bag to look at later.

"Suddenly Adar yelled through the radio that the fuel pump is cycling and he can't turn it off. There was a half load of fuel down there, he said. He wanted out fast.

"I headed for engineering but before I got there he screamed and there was nothing more but static. I couldn't open the iris valve to engineering, the pressure telltale said there was pressure on the other side. I noticed a port looking in and there was Adar with his faceplate smashed and his chest caved in. A valve fitting had ruptured and gas was spewing all over the compartment.
I got myself out of that ship and away as fast as I could but when it blew it threw my ship all around anyway. I jury-rigged some repairs and came here to tell Adar's family and try to cash in on these disks so I could do some real work on our ship."

## WHAT'S ON THAT DISK?

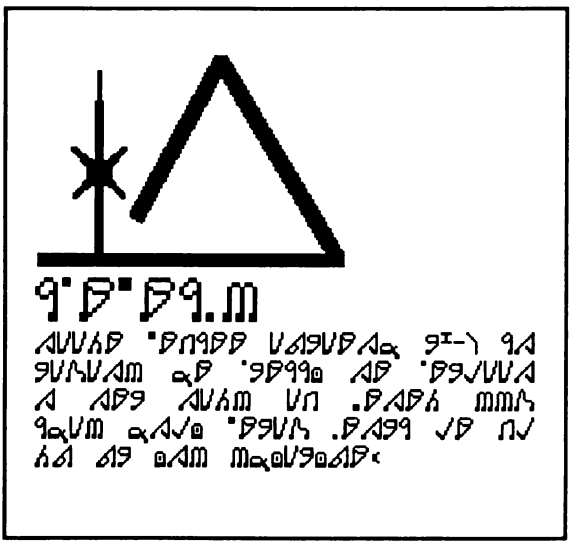
There is perhaps no better place in the Imperium to try to read First Imperium data disks than in the AAB labs.

The AAB has two working disk players. One of Dr. Imlu's co-workers, Leshan Bezi, can rig one of them up to play the tape. The AAB used to have a third player, but unfortunately it was destroyed several years ago in a fire at another museum, where it had been loaned.

It would be natural for Dr. Imlu to invite any others with him at the time of this incident to view the disk with him.

Once the machine has been set up, the first thing to show is three minutes of a logo and a printed message. Dr. Imlu can read the writing along with the disk's narrator, as follows:

*"Magigakhir urepshirir galukagarumii K419 shima kiguugmude iir akirishashus miri arkangigam mi murku migikhidi gipu ermirukha daduu shiigidu iimnas urkaguu irmikasha nur pun khilu luka samid diisegakasilar.*



Dr. Imlu can translate written Old High Vilani with ease. Spoken Vilani of the time period of the disk is more difficult, and may take several listenings. In addition, several words on the disk are unknown to Dr. Imlu. These are evidently the names of people or places.

The translation of the message on these first three minutes of the disk is as follows:

*"Wait! If you do not have Security Clearance K419, you must not view this data. Stop the machine and report this incident to your supervisor! Viewing this data without the proper security clearance is a crime."*

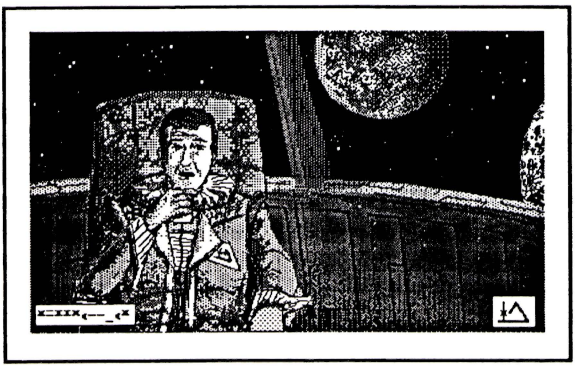
Above these words is the old Sharurshid Bureau emblem, as it appeared in the First Imperium, and the Vilani word "Sharurshid".

After three minutes, the transmission immediately becomes garbled static. Not only is the proper security code needed to legally possess the disk, but it seems that a decoding key must be known in order to play it back. From the prominent use of the Sharurshid Bureau logo, the party should be able to guess that an old Sharurshid code is being used.

Fortunately, the standard codes once used in the First Imperium are now

widely known. Krenstein may remember studying them in some of his advanced mathematics classes as a graduate student at Rhylanor Institute of Technology. It will be difficult but not impossible for him to figure out how to break the code.

For Krenstein to break the code, use the following UTP:
FORMIDABLE, computer, int, 30 min



Once Krenstein succeeds in breaking the code and the disk is played, a man in odd-looking clothing appears, in a room with a sweeping space view behind him. He begins speaking in High Vilani. Imlu can, with difficulty, give a simultaneous translation, the text of which follows.

**THE AGENT'S REPORT**

(Caption: Progress report of Uradanid Project: Agent Lazeish Lumshaa reporting in the 1,108th year of Ziru Sirka.)

"Greetings. Agent Urip Nanikishu will arrive at project headquarters with a complete report of this situation. This is only a preliminary report. Since it has been impractical for this project to have much day-to-day supervision from your office over the past 30 years, a brief summary of events may be in order.

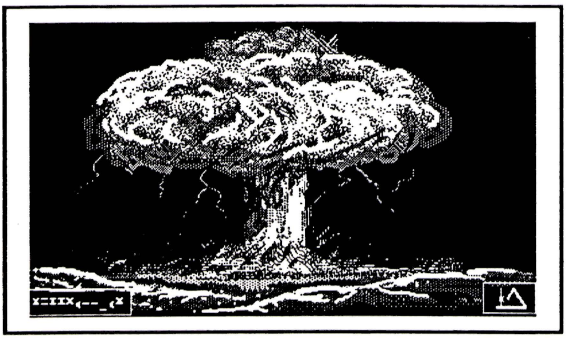
"As you know, our bureau, working in concert with Makhidkarun and Naasirka, has discovered more than 30 human subspecies within our assigned territories. As of yet, none of these newfound races when discovered had advanced their technology to a point at which interstellar travel was possible.

"As you also know, a lost race of aliens once inhabited this area of the galaxy. It is only a matter of time until Ziru Sirka encounters another starfaring race.

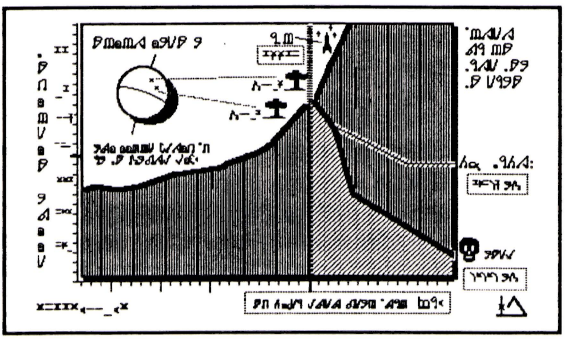
"It would be to our bureau's advantage if we could predict the reaction of Vilani citizens to this event. With this in mind, when Sharurshid investigators discovered the world of Uradanid, no overt contact was made. The Uradane are not yet aware of the existence of our empire. When the Uradane achieve the power of space flight, our researchers will be at hand to discover and record their reactions when they encounter another race already travelling among the stars. This information, private to our bureau, will be quite useful when we Vilani find ourselves in similar circumstances.

"To this end, the discovery of the Uradane was not announced, and our agents on Uradanid have covertly pushed Uradane technology forward as rapidly as practicable. In one way our efforts have been successful. By suggesting lines of research in obscure papers and letters and in discussion with well known

researchers, we have produced an explosion of technology. Since we have been here, the Uradane have progressed from the use of simple fuels to a knowledge of simple electronics and fission reactions."



(View of nuclear explosion appears.) "However, I must report that the ultimate goal of our mission still seems far in the future. Introducing nuclear fission among the Uradane has produced no power generators at all. Instead, five years ago, fission weapons were used to end a global war, killing tens of thousands of Uradane. The two major factions in this planet's power struggle are stockpiling such weapons rapidly."



(View of graph appears.) "This year, a new war has begun, which our analysts predict will again involve these two major factions. We expect a nuclear exchange at a probability factor of eighty-six per cent." (View of man appears again.) "Since this project has proceeded without the direct supervision or knowledge of Igsiirdi, I am unsure of what steps to take now. For the safety of Sharurshid agents, I have ordered all personnel to evacuate Uradanid and remain here in orbit until the situation has changed."

"If these Uradane shuulamane destroy themselves in a cataclysmic nuclear war, Sharurshid will be accused of genocide. If the Uradane achieve jump capability, we are concerned that they will export their new predilection for nuclear weapons and endanger Ziru Sirka.

"When Agent Urip Nanikishu arrives at your station, he will provide full details of this project for you. All Uradanid operations will be postponed until he returns with further instructions."

The data disk then goes blank.

Finding out what the disk means is fairly easy but should still require some dice rolls and player input. Don't just give everything to the players on a silver platter courtesy of the NPCs. Once the party understands the disk's message, the rest of the adventure should be an attempt to prove or disprove its claims. Akidda should be very eager to research this scoop.

Star fields in the viewport behind the Sharurshid agent can be analyzed and will be found to be of the Solomani Rim area at about -2600. If players try to look up "Uradanid" they will find no such reference. A planet and a very large moon are somewhat visible. Detailed computer anlysis of the picture will take a half hour and will determine that the view is of Terra as seen from the L5 point, where the gravity and centrifugal forces of Terra and its moon balance each other.

Now what? Go to higher authorities with this? This would cause uproar and consternation and our players would be asked to assist in a full investigation.

Sit on the information? Players will find this impossible once the newscast below comes out and the police trace the receipt back to Imlu.

Try to check it out? This is the route Dr. Imlu will encourage the players to take.

Release the disk's claims to the media as is? Some less reputable companies would accept it, but authorities would ferret out the source of this subversive story and demand explanations. More cautious firms would begin investigations of their own. Players might be offered good pay to assist.

In any case, Khamur never returns for his disk.

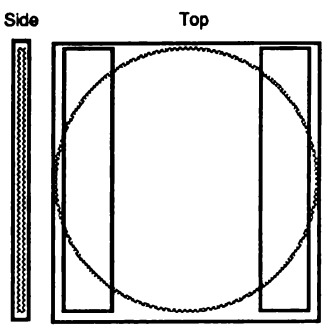
## NOTES ON DATA STORAGE TECHNOLOGY

Data storage technology in the First Imperium was far different than modern tech level 15 data storage techniques.

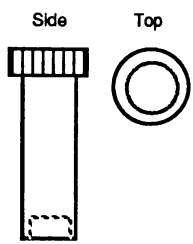
The Vilani were at tech level 9 and 10 prior to the founding of the First Imperium. In the early centuries of the First Imperium technology edged into tech level 11—where it stayed for the duration of the empire.

Tech level 8 is typically where optical mass storage methods replace old, more volatile, magnetic mass storage. Besides being less fragile, optical storage provides an order of magnitude improvement in storage capacity. The common tech 11 optical mass storage disk of the First Imperium could hold up to 20 million words: all in a flat "wafer" disk case only 5cm on a side.

The early years of the Third Imperium saw another breakthrough: holocrystal technology. Holocrystal storage is a tech level 13 capability; it is an extension of older two-dimensional optical technology. The use of holographic techniques to store data ushers in another order of magnitude increase in storage capacity. A protective cylinder 1 cm in diameter and 3 cm long encloses the actual holocrystal. The standard commercial tech 13+ holocrystal can hold up to 200 million words.




Tech 11 Optical Disk




Tech 13+ Holocrystal

If the players try to contact Arkika Khamur at the Monte Vista Towers, the robot desk will inform them that he checked out the day before, leaving no forwarding information.

Inquiring for him at the starport will yield the name of his ship (Admadu), which was docked at Pad 4 in Bay 73, but the ship cleared and left two days ago. Flight plans are public information.

While they are making these inquiries, a docking bay worker will approach the official that they are talking to and quietly ask her to come to 4 of 73 as they have "a serious problem there". He is very upset and insistent.

The starport official will be sorry she could not help the characters any further and will pay no further attention to them. If they are curious, they can follow her and the worker at a slight distance on the slidewalks. The official will not want them in her way in what is really none of their business, but she will not be outright rude to knights of the O.E.G.

If they do not follow, read them the newscast the next morning.

If they do follow, they will see a body discovered behind some grav platforms in Bay 4. The body was in a large burlap bag, and would have been loaded onto another waiting freighter if the cargo robot had not noticed the bag leaking and called for human assistance. The body is "ripe" and shows signs of violence. If the characters can get a look at the face, they will recognize Khamur.

The Starport does not voice check when flight plans are filed. Most clearances are direct computer-to-computer communications, and traditionally, starship security is the skipper's responsibility.

Police will question the characters as to why they wanted to see Khamur. The party need not mention the contents of the disk, and the police will consider it to be in good hands at the Encyclopedia, pending the discovery of any next-of-kin. (Khamur has none.) If police attempt to follow the ship according to the filed flight plan, they will not find it. An alert to neighboring star systems will (in a few weeks) turn up the Admadu, floating derelict with all items of value stripped out of it.

**A NEWSCAST**

If the players have failed to check into Khamur's whereabouts, they will catch the following Vidnet newscast:

"Law enforcement officials are investigating what seems to be a clear case of homicide and grand theft. The body of 38-year old Arkika Khamur was found in a starport landing bay today by starport officials. Khamur was the owner of the *Admadu*, an asteroid mining ship registered out of Ersii.

"The Admadu lifted with apparently valid clearances two days ago. The coroner's report indicates that Khamur probably died at about that time of a skull fracture. "

For the greatest realism, this newscast should be presented as the third or fourth news item among these other news items:

"Tickets for tours of the Grand Imperial Palace plus the Heroes Of Vland

National Monuments will be on sale for only Cr600 at any office of Imperial Bilanidun Tours. We have offices in over 900 locations in Enlugal alone."

"The concert last night of the visiting Philharmonic Society of Yahya showed this group of musicians from Antares to be a group with few peers. Their repertoire is wide and varied, ranging from pre-contact Vilani and Solomani composers to the latest works of Kirshaam Naalir, composer in residence of Kaarike University here on Vland.

Their interpretation of this large body of work is sensitive and consistent. Their adaptations of Grand Imperial peices to Antarean instrumentation are of the highest quality, showing true insight into the cultural milieu of the First Imperium.

The Philharmonic Society of Yahya, which is on a ten-year tour of the Imperium, will be with us for another 5 weeks before travelling to Kagamira, their next stop. They are performing every 3 days, in the ballroom of Biirashkir Hotel.

You won't want to miss this truly great orchestra."

"Vland Central Exchange released the tenweek-end figures for the major megacorporations today. Naasirka is maintaining a slight margin over the others with Sharurshid holding a solid second.

A Naasirka spokesman released a statement today that dividends for the latest tenweek are Cr4.96 per share. Posted dividends have been over Cr4 per share for nine consecutive tenweeks.

Ling Standard Products has announced its plans to start hiring for its new manufacturing complex in Imagul (near Ishimaga) sometime in the next three weeks."

"His Excellency, Naarid Tiirabur, the Grand Duke of Vland, was reported in stable condition following his surgery two days ago. The Ducal physician states that the Duke is expected to return home in about two weeks.

It was also announced that the Duke intends to retire and will resign in favor of his daughter, Marila Tiirabur-Karid, Duchess Select, as soon as the Duke's health permits him to hold the investiture ceremonies. It is expected that Crown Princess Ciencia will represent Emperor Strephon at the ceremonies."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## STAR HARBOR

Using the registry of the Admadu, the players could attempt to backtrack Khamur to the data disk's source. First, it would behoove them to look up the library data on the system, Ersii (Vland 1612 E-361431-8). They will have to hire a ship or get passage on an ore freighter, since no scheduled passenger vessels approach the "Star Harbor" system. The Encyclopedia will be willing to pick up the tab since salvage rights will revert to the Imperium and the disks would end up as official property. Discourage any attempts to stow away; ore holds are not pressurized.

Once in the system, any inquiries naming Khamur or his ship will bring gangster musclemen to the players wanting to know what they know of him. After all, when they sell a guy "insurance" and then his ship gets blown up and his partner's in a coma in the hospital, they'll be interested in anyone else interested in the events.

Your players should notice a certain inconsistency here to what they learned before. The ship *Merhoff* picked up Adar Teque on a loose bit of asteroid, responding to a suit radio distress signal, after a big explosion just before--quite a spectacle. Adar has been in a coma ever since, although at times he mumbles words or parts of sentences. Who could Adar and Khamur's enemy be, that their ship was destroyed? The gang may believe that the party had something to do with the destruction of the Admadu.

To convince these space mobsters that the players are not guilty:
DIFFICULT, streetwise, int, 3 min

The players of course can state that it was not the *Admadu* that exploded and that they have since spoken to Khamur but he was later murdered. Khamur's story of finding his partner obviously dead and barely escaping with his own skin is now in doubt. Some belters who were out at the time could give logged coordinates of the explosion.

To find such a helpful belter:
DIFFICULT, streetwise, int, 2 hours

To find a ship for hire to search for pieces of the blown-up vessel:
ROUTINE, int, edu, 1 hour
REFEREE: If any character other than Dur tries this, it is a difficult task.

A few pieces of worked metal were brought in a few days ago by one prospector. They are crystal iron, tech level 11 quality.

## ADAR'S RAMBLINGS

A wise nurse has written down any of Adar's ramblings that she heard. They include:

"Arkika...Arkika!"
"Hey, Arkika, what's the matter? No! NO!"
"...get the cable around it..."

"Help me...HELP ME!"
"No, Arkika, I said NO!..."
"What is it?"
"I'm tired of your SPT nonsense...let me get some sleep..."
"...let's forget the whole thing..."
"Arkika, I don't want to hear it anymore!"
"...must hold at least 40 tons..."
"Arkika...come in...ARKIKA!"
"Where do you think you're going?"

## ENDING THE ADVENTURE

When the Terrans first encountered the original Grand Imperium, it took them relatively little time to overwhelm it. Unfortunately, their rule was no more enlightened or progressive than that of the Vilani. From a tight, paternalistic, centralized economic empire, the pendulum swung to a disjointed military empire. Neither was really tenable over such a large domain.

The agressiveness of the Solomani was eventually diluted with the culture of Vland in the formation of the Third Imperium. Also, the Solomani hypothesis was shown to be demonstrably correct, as Terra is the only planet in known space with a clear evolutionary sequence including humankind as an integral part of it.

The question of course arises as to why, if Terra was the original planet of mankind, did the Solomani wait so long before making the breakthroughs that led to the harnessing of the means to get to the stars? If some doubt could be raised as to the background of the Terrans as a technological race, then the present Imperium would be less inclined to relax the present martial law over Terra.

How could this be done?

One way would be by showing that Terra's sudden jump to high technology was brought about by Vilani scientists planted on Terra in the late 19th to mid-20th century (Old Terran Calendar). This could take the shape of a failed experiment. A possible scenario would be that a group of business people, trying to predict what the reaction of Vland and the First Imperium would be to a superior power or race contacting them, had set up an experiment on a human planet (Terra) that they had discovered and kept secret.

After bringing the native population up to Imperial or near-Imperial tech standards, and then letting them discover the Imperium, the researchers could find out what the Terrans' reactions were, and then start speculating on those commodities that there was a run on when the Terrans found out.

Unfortunately, the "inherent instability" of the Terran mind perverted the peaceful uses of the technology given to them. The scientists, to protect the Vilani Imperium, decided against giving the Terrans any more technology. The Vilani left Terra, expecting that the natives would destroy each other in their foolishness.

The experiment ended there, but the fact that the Terrans burst into Vilani space only a couple of centuries later would speak for itself. Of course the Terrans had developed jump drive "on their own", but if it hadn't been for the technological boost given them by the Vilani researchers, they wouldn't have been able to do it so quickly.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

If the players haven't caught on yet, NPCs are going to have to help them. If the players fail to research the word "shuulamane", Dr. Imlu will study the background of the word himself. The word used at the end of the disk to refer to the Terrans, "shuulamane", refers to a common but unusually obnoxious Vilani animal.

The use of the term on the disk would cast aspersions on the Terrans, by implying that the term "Solomani" was derived from a nickname applied to the early Terrans by a group of visiting social scientists from Vland. Unfortunately for the conspirators, the shuulamane was imported to Vland about sixty years after that time. The term is anachronistic; the disk is a hoax. The next task for the party is to find out who is responsible for this. The characters should follow up on the obvious lead given them by Adar Teque's comatose ramblings.

## WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

As a devoted member of the Society for the Protection of Terra, Arkika Khamur was asked to help with one of their biggest and grandest con schemes: forge an old Vilani data disk that contains data slamming the Solomani and thus strengthen the SPT's position that the Terrans are really not suited to ruling themselves.

About six years ago, the SPT stole a rare First Imperium disk player/recorder and several disks from a museum on a world near Vland. To cover up their crime, they burned the museum to the ground. Investigators thought the disks and player were lost in the fire. Six years passed and the incident was forgotten.

Recently, the SPT purchased an L-Hyd tank, filled it with hydrogen and a fluoride oxydizer, (along with some explosives for good measure), and put the tank in an asteroid belt in the Star Harbor system. Khamur was given a radio detonator to the tank and instructed to eliminate his partner, Adar Teque, because Adar knew too much about Khamur and his connection with the SPT.

Khamur was given a data disk and told to return to Vland and give it to one of the prominent historians at the Encyclopedia on Vland. His "story", that he found the disk on a derelict ship and was simply out to make a fast credit, was carefully rehearsed with SPT officials until they were satisfied he could relay it convincingly.

What he was not told was that the SPT planned to eliminate him after he had done this, and thus completely cover any trail leading back to them.

Besides the shuulamane error, the flaw that ruined an otherwise brilliant scheme was that the SPT counted on Khamur to properly eliminate his partner. Adar had noticed something was amiss on his way to investigate the L-Hyd tank, and had maneuvered himself around a nearby asteroid trying to see where Khamur had taken the ship when Khamur exploded the tank. Adar was jolted and thrown around as he got the ride of his life on the asteroid, and while he received serious injuries, he did survive.

Players may choose to "join" the society to obtain information, or to break into their offices to snoop through computer records, or to ask local police for help in ferreting out background information.

**Ersii/ Kagamira** (Vland 1612 E-361431-8): This system has three of the richest asteroid belts in the entire Vland Sector. It is owned by the Khuushe family, which currently consists of Baron Khuushe and his twin 19-year-old daughters. However, much power is wielded by a gang which controls the ore processing facilities and collects protection money from the belters. None of the major corporations have kept a foothold in the system because of this group.

**Ishimaga Genealogical Society**: Members of this group are proud of the high percentage of Vilani blood flowing through their veins. Potential members are carefully screened, both genealogically and biologically, to ensure that they qualify by their racial purity. The IGS was formed sometime during the Long Night, but its early history is not well known. Offices of the IGS can be found throughout the Imperium, with headquarters on Ishimaga (Lishun 0101).

**Kaaribilanidin (Vland Club)**: Kaaribilanidin is less violent than many pro-Vilani societies. The group is not strictly anti-Terran, but believes that Vland, because of its historical status as the capital of the First Imperium, should have more direct control over political decisions in the Imperium. Kaaribilanidin was founded on Vland in 654, shortly after the Civil War. It was instrumental in influencing Emperor Zhakirov to reject the Solomani Movement's basic positions and to sympathize with Vilani nobles.

**One Imperium Movement**: Adherents of this organization believe that all of the peoples of both the previous Imperiums should be united in one massive Imperium, including the coreward extents of the First Imperium and the Solomani Sphere. An offshoot of this group, the Full Imperium Party, believes that because the Zhodani are humans, they should also be conquered and forced to live like "decent people". The One Imperium Movement has a long history, dating from shortly after the verification of the Solomani Hypothesis.

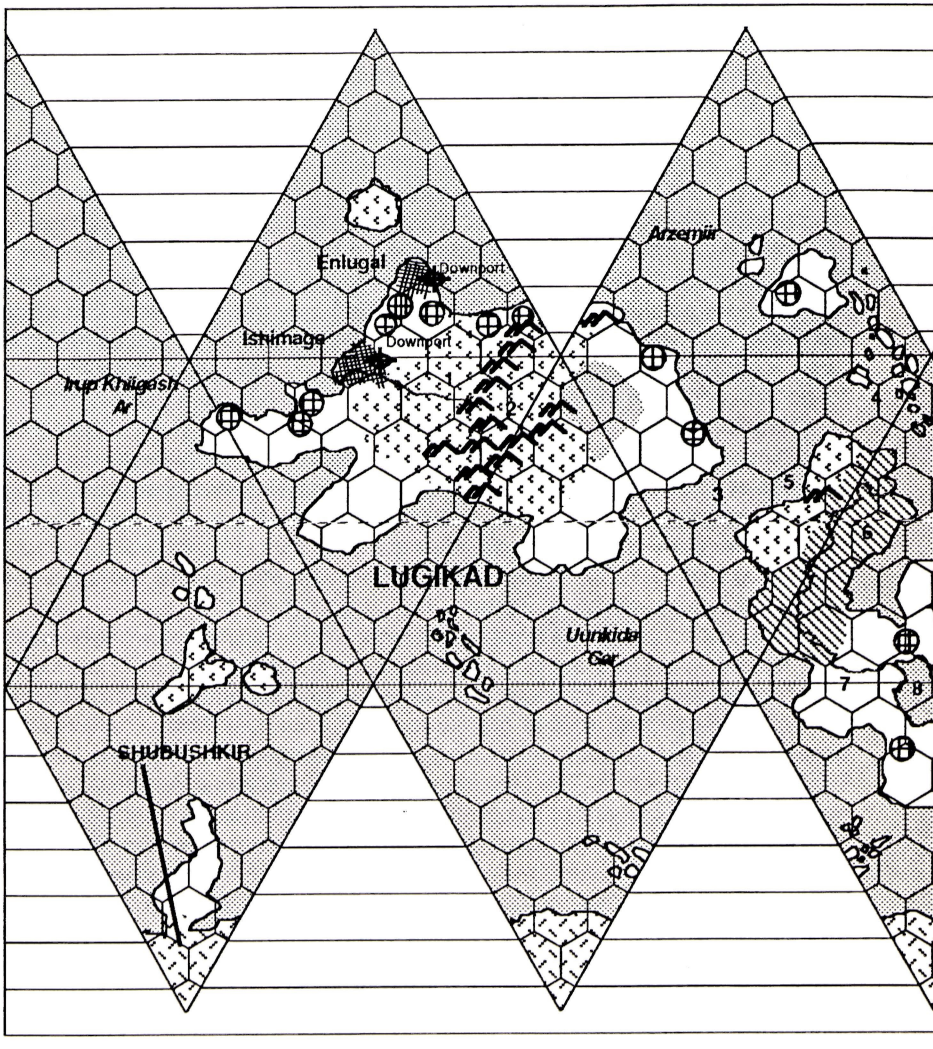
In 1098, several high ranking officials of the Full Imperium Party were prosecuted by the Imperium for the high justice crimes of bribing Imperial officials in the Spinward Marches sector and the attempted theft of a 500,000-ton Naval dreadnought.

**Rachele Society**: Secret Vilani supremacist group founded by Zid Rachele in 992. Genocidal policies favored by the group culminated in the attempted takeover of the Pretorian Government in 1010. An attempt at nuclear blackmail backfired when 26,000 people (including 1,900 Rachelean commandos) were killed by a nuclear explosion after the Society seized Imperial Scout facilities on Saki (Deneb 0306). Despite the lack of activity from the Rachele Society during the past half-century, some military analysts insist that the Rachele Society still exists. Zid Rachele himself disappeared in 1015 after escaping from the prison world Exile (Deneb 1928).

**Shuulamane**: Native to Khula (Vland 1920), the shuulamane was accidentally introduced to Vland by some of the earliest Vilani space flights. The animal is now so common (and so obvious when encountered) that most Vilani do not realize that the shuulamane is not a native species.

The creature is ugly and rodentlike, with dull greenish-gray fur covering its

*— continued on page 32*




# Vland A967A9A-F 1 hex

Dir Gar

ALASHAD

ADMEGUN
LASHA

Kigunar Kipin
Ar

USHIRUD
KIIGI

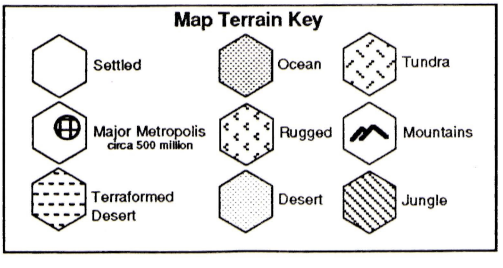
Padusdaem
Sakugar
Ir

GISHKAR

Eshka
Ar

IRKA
IR

KHII ESHKHIMA




x=424 km

*continued from page 29—*
body, except for the head, which is smooth and has no apparent ears. The most obvious feature of the shuulamane is the product of its two powerful scent glands, used to mark carrion and prevent other species from interfering with its find.

Unfortunately, the shuulamane reproduces quickly, with up to four litters of six to ten young each during Vland's long year. The shuulamane can be found in almost every region of Vland with a temperate climate, although eradication of the species in the larger cities has been mostly successful.

The shuulamane is the subject of many Vilani proverbs and folktales, all attesting to the animal's vices of stupidity, laziness, cowardice, foul odor, and lack of cleanliness.

Encounter statistics: 1 Carrion-eater, 3 kg, 2/2 hits, no armor, 3 teeth, A9 F3 S3.

Referee: The shuulamane was not introduced "by some of the earliest space flights", but was brought to Vland about -2450. The animal's common and obvious presence, and its place in Vilani folklore, accounts for the common misconception. A summarized library data entry would not contain this information; a detailed reference lookup would be more accurate in this regard.

**Society for the Protection of Terra:** Members of this society recommend that Terra be kept under Imperial rule, and not be allowed self-government again. They argue that since Humaniti originated on Terra, the world should be administered as a preserve by the Imperium and not be given the chance of rebelling again, "endangering our glorious heritage and the planet of our origins." The SPT was founded by Admiral David Mason in the 1050s, several decades after the Solomani Rim War had come to a close. The group is strongest in Vland Sector.

**True Humanity Society:** This radical group believes that when the Ancients brought Humaniti out of Terra, they took the sentient humans and left only the subhuman "apemen" of Terra. They also believe that pure-blooded Vilani should cooperate with the Zhodani and some of the minor human races to "put the apes back in the zoo (Terra)". After its founding by Sunaam Parshish and Khadu Shaa in 1076 and a few brief years of activity, the True Humanity Society is now almost extinct.

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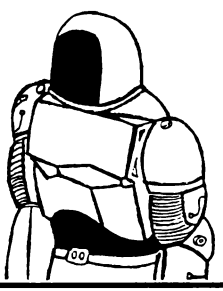
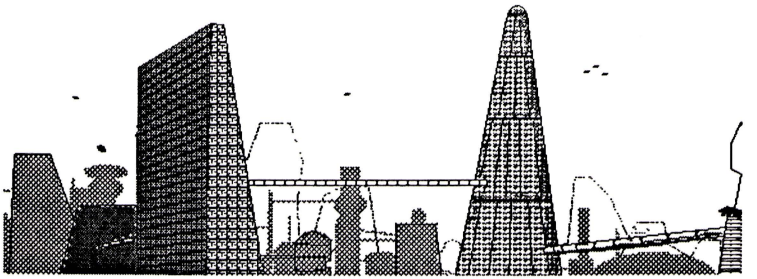


# Vland!

## CRADLE OF THE FIRST IMPERIUM

—by J. Andrew Keith



Vland 0307 A967A9A-F N Subsector Capital
**Primary:** Urakkalan, spectral type F8V. Mass 1.144 standard. Stellar diameter 1.178 standard. Liminosity 2.126 standard. Also refered to as "Vland's Sun" or simply "The Sun".
**Planetary System:** Six major bodies. One inhabited world (Vland, IV). No gas giants, one planetoid belt, one empty orbit (#5) in the system.
IV Vland: Mean orbital radius 204.95 million kilometers (1.37 AUs). Period, 484.72 days...three satellites...Diameter, 14,850 kilometers. Density, 1.02. Mass, 1.45 standard. Mean surface gravity, 1.15 g. Rotation period; 31 hours, 48 minutes, 18.8 seconds. Axial inclination, 26°19'29.6". Albedo, 0.31...Surface atmospheric pressure, 1.00 atm; composition— standard oxygen-nitrogen mix, breathable without artificial assistance. Hydrographic percentage, 74%; composition— liquid water. Mean surface temperature, 18°C.
From A Pilot's Guide to the Vland Subsector, 1102 edition.

Vland, homeworld of the Vilani race, is an ancient world of crumbling antiquities and ultra-modern technologies. Shaped in equal measure by the forces of nature and the meddling hands of men, the planet holds a unique place in history as the cradle of the First Imperium.

### GEOGRAPHY

Two major land masses and a sprinkling of smaller ones dominate the planet. The largest continent, whose name translates as "Land of the God's Wars", was discovered fairly late in Vilani history; the race developed on the smaller major continent, usually referred to as Lugikad.

Lugikad is further divided into two distinct regions by the Ashkige Mountains, a barrier mountain range comparable to Terra's Himalayas in height and ruggedness. Formed by converging tectonic plates, these mountains are subject to frequent seismic activity, and were once a storehouse of mineral wealth of all kinds.

The Vilani grew up first around the Degar ("Gray River"), eventually speading throughout the continent. When extended sea voyages became possible, ships began to venture to neighboring lands. The most impressive of these was the Khii Eshkhima ("Land of the God's Wars", after an ancient Vilani myth); extremes of climate and terrain made this landmass seem a veritable battleground of the forces of nature. Prominent features include Nedadip Wall, 2300 kilometers of rugged mountains and vertical cliffs that rise from the ocean like a warning barrier; Kuragan's Jungle (named for an ancient Vilani god) straddling Irzar Siigiizuni("River of Heroes"); the inland Edamar ("Sea of Fables"), and the windswept expanse of Dikaai ("The Desert").

The Desert has been rehabilitated over the millenia by Vilani weather control and terraforming. Few live there even yet; it is a vast agricultural area operated by agrobots, with only a few hundred thousand square kilometers of desert ecology preserve.

The other continents on Vland are smaller and less significant. Admegun Lasha ("Land of the Sky"), a rugged continent isolated by distance and dangerous seas, remains to this day a wilderness preserve; other continents and islands are thoroughly inhabited by the nearly 40 billion people of the planet.

## CLIMATE

Vland is a hothouse planet, with equatorial temperatures often exceeding 60°C in the daytime. This is moderated by the cooling effects of the coasts; still, hot and humid weather is the rule over much of the planet.The planet has no permanent polar icecaps, though winter on the south continent Shubushkir ("Land of Cold") can get quite chilly, complete with snow and ice. Vland's six degree axial tilt makes for moderate variations of seasonal weather conditions.

## RESOURCES

A planet with a history as long as Vland's, and with a population as high, is bound to suffer to a certain extent from exhaustion of resources. Even before the Vilani reached into space some natural resources were already at a premium, although the Vilani were particularly fortunate in that the abundant supplies of petrochemicals on the planet were not seriously depleted before the rise of higher-tech power sources. Vland still exports petrochemicals on a limited scale to less advanced neighbors, a few of which still use internal combustion engines, petroleum-based lubricants, and other such products.

For the most part, though, the commodities obtainable on Vland are of a processed or manufactured nature. Advanced high-tech farming techniques make Vland the subsector's leading producer of processed agricultural goods and agro-products; even with Vland's high population, production outstrips consumption by a considerable margin. Vland's other important exports include weaponry and delicate gravitics systems.

## THE WORKS OF MAN

With so many people, Vland has few regions which do not show signs of human development. Lugikad is the most heavily populated continent, holding both of Vland's two largest cities, Enlugal (pop. 9,780,000,000) and Ishimaga (pop. 2,860,000,000). There are also nine cities with over 500 million inhabitants on this continent alone. With the exception of the Desert and the Land of the Sky, virtually every piece of usable land area on Vland is built up and settled. Over two billion people inhabit the three major space complexes which orbit Vland.

Vland's cities are sprawling, somewhat disorganized warrens of soaring towers linked by walkways at a dozen or more levels. In the largest cities, each tower can be considered almost a small city in itself, although Vland's arcologies are by no means as self-sufficient as those of less hospitable worlds, such as Azun in the Solomani Rim.

Many of these high-tech arcologies tower over far less sophisticated urban areas of a bygone era. Vland's links to the past have caused a certain degree of architectural inertia; many antiquated tech 5-10 cities are considered landmarks of historical significance and are allowed to stand, preserved through the centuries; a more progressive society would have long since torn them down. Conservatism is a watchword of Vilani society on Old Vland.

Two major starports serve the major cities of Enlugal and Ishimaga; smaller spaceport facilities are found at most other urban centers. Vland's bureaucratic government and high law level make it very difficult to obtain clearances to land away from the major ports. Most spaceport traffic consists of commercial suborbital shuttles and traffic to the three orbital space complexes.

## THE STAR SYSTEM

Vland has three moons. The inner moon is Irukka (G42422C-E), a barren slab of rock about 200,000 kilometers from the planet. A small station run by a planet-based corporation is maintained on Irukka, but the satellite is of very little importance.

Gashema (F43456C-E) is much more important. Orbiting at roughly 550,000 kilometers, Gashema is marginally habitable. It supports a fairly sizable colony, including an Imperial Research Station and a military installation.

Kalaguur (H7A2220-E), over 750,000 kilometers from Vland, is a very large satellite with a poisonous atmosphere. It supports a tiny corporate colony, like Irukka, but is less important over all.

The rest of the star system is largely unremarkable. The sixth planet, Luukad, is the site of the system's primary naval facilities, and the asteroid belt is still a prospecting site, despite the fact that most of the more valuable minerals were mined out before the Vilani Imperium discovered Terra. The other worlds are, on the whole, of little value; the system lacks even a gas giant, so the natural focus of attention remains fixed on Vland itself.

## GRAND SURVEY

Information for this article describing and mapping Vland was generated using *Grand Survey*, Digest Group Publications' recently released Traveller supplement.

*Grand Survey* contains complete rules to develop any Traveller world, whether generated from basic Traveller or from Book 6 *Scouts*. *Grand Survey* covers how to progress from a set of basic stats to a fully detailed planet with physical data, climate and weather, geography, resources, and habitation information, complete with examples.

Besides the obvious material for the Traveller referee, *Grand Survey* also contains material specifically for Traveller players: equipment and techniques used to survey new worlds, and complete plans of the *Donosev* class Scout Survey vessel.

*Grand Survey* deals with the non-contact aspects of system surveys. It will soon be joined by a second supplement, *Grand Census*. *Grand Census* deals with the contact aspect of system surveys, and thus will focus on the social, economic, and technological aspects of a world.•

# WORLD PROFILE

1. Date of Preparation: 100-1112

2. World Name: Vland

3. Location: Vland Sector 1717

4. UPP: A 9 6 7 A 9 A F

## PHYSICAL DATA

Data describing the world's basic physical attributes in more detail.

5. Diameter: 14,850 km

6. Density: 1.02 standard

7. Mass: 1.45 standard

8. Mean Surface Gravity: 1.15 g

9. Rotation Period: 31 hrs 48 min 18 sec

10. Orbital Period: 478.72 std days

11. Seasons (*list*): Spring, Summer, High Summer, Fading, Winter, Warming (80 days each)

12. Axial Tilt: 6° 19' 29"

13. Orbital Eccentricity: 0.005

14. Satellites:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Irukka | G42422C-E | (12 diameters distant) |
| Gushema | F43456C-E | (35 diameters) |
| Kalaguur | H7A222D-E | (50 diameters) |

15. Surface Atmospheric Pressure: 1.00 atm

16. Atmospheric Composition: Standard oxygen-nitrogen mix

16a. Atmospheric Terraforming? ☐ Yes ☒ No

17. Hydrographic Percentage: 74%

18. Hydrographic Composition: Water

18a. Hydrographic Terraforming? ☐ Yes ☒ No

## TEMPERATURE

Data concerning world surface temperature and various modifiers.

19. Base Mean Surface Temperature: 18°C

20. Axial Tilt Modifiers: +3.6°C, -6°C

21. Rotation Modifiers: +15.5°C, -31°C

22. Latitude Modifiers: +1.125 per 2° towards equator; -1.6875 per 2° towards pole

23. Orbital Eccentricity Modifiers: ± 0.15°C

24a. Weather Control? ☒ Yes ☐ No

24b. Greenhouse Effect Terraforming? ☐ Yes ☒ No

24c. Albedo Terraforming? ☐ Yes ☒ No

25. Other Modifiers: none

## MAPPING DATA

Data describing the details of a world's makeup which affect world mapping.

26. Num. of Tectonic Plates: 6

27a. Native Life? ☒ Yes ☐ No

27b. Terrain Terraforming? ☒ Yes ☐ No

28. Major Continents: 2

29. Minor Continents: 5

30. Major Oceans: world

31. Minor Oceans: world

32. World Name

Vland

## SEISMIC DATA

Data indicating the relative likelihood of seismic activity.

| 33. Stress Factor | 34. Notable Volcanoes |
|---|---|
| 15 | none |

## RESOURCES

Data indicating the presence of resources of various kinds.

35. Natural Resources (*list* )

Petrochemicals (7)

36. Processed Resources (*list* )

Agricultural (12), Agroproducts (14)

37. Manufactured Products (*list* )

Weapons (10), Mechanical (8), Gravitics (8)

## POPULATION & PORTS

Describe the world's population centers and space facilities in detail.

38. World Population

37,230,000,000

39. Primary Cities ( *list name, population, and starport type* )

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Enlugal | 9,780,000,000 | A |
| Ishimaga | 2,860,000,000 | A |
| Ishimaga orbital | 832,000,000 | A |
| Enlugal orbital | 755,000,000 | A |

40. Secondary Cities ( *list number of cities, their population level, and their typical spaceport type* )

21 cities, circa 500 million, class F spaceport

1 orbital complex, circa 500 million, class F spaceport

41. Tertiary Cities ( *list number of cities, their population level, and their typical spaceport type* )

105 cities, circa 50 million, class H spaceport

## KEY TO VLAND MAP TERMS

### Oceans

*Irup Khiigash Ar:* "Waters that bring forth the wind" or simply "Windsource Ocean", from the root "irup" which can mean "wind", "ar" which means "vast waters" or "ocean", and "khii" which means "from", "out of", or "here".

*Uunkida Gar:* "Great South Sea" ("gar" as used here means "lesser waters", which is often translated as "sea").

*Arzemiir:* Meaning uncertain, perhaps "Ocean of Storms", from the root "zamun" meaning "storm".

*Kigunar Irupim Ar:* "Waters of the vanishing wind" or "Windless Ocean".

*Dir Gar:* Meaning uncertain, perhaps "Lost Sea", from the term "dera" for "lost" or "invisible". Other scholars prefer "Sea of Shadows", from the root "daar", meaning shadows.

*Radusdaam Sakugar Ki:* Literally "Flee from these unapproachable lesser waters"; often translated as simply "Forbidden Sea".

*Eshka Ar:* "The God's Ocean", from the word "eshka", meaning "belonging to the gods", or "domain of the gods".

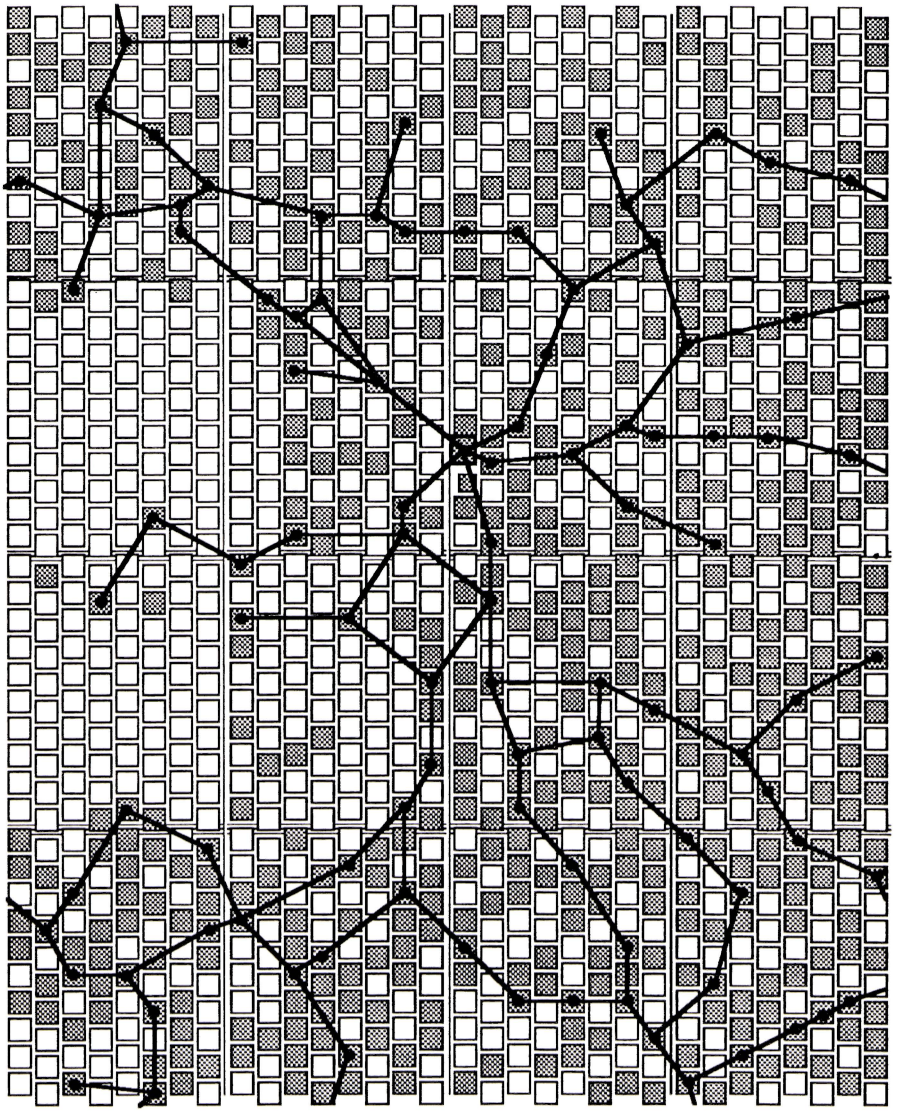
### Major Continents

*Lugikad:* Meaning unknown; perhaps from "galik" which means literally "home".

*Khii Eshkhima:* Literally "Here is the domain of the god's wars"; often just "Land of the God's Wars".

### Map Features

1 Degar ("gray river"); Founders of the Imperium Mountain at headwaters
2 Ashkige Mountains
3 Gulf of Disiki
4 Iikun ("gateway") Islands
5 Nedadip Wall
6 Kuragan's Jungle
7 Heroes of Vland Monument; Irzar Siigiizuni ("river of heroes")
8 Edamar ("sea of fables")
9 Dikaai ("the desert")



Xboat Routes of the Vland Sector

# Library Data of the Vland Sector

## LIBRARY DATA OF THE SECTOR

— by Nancy Parker

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Voskhod | Vhodan | Anarsi | Theton |
| Lalaki Kharir | Kagamira | Vland | Shiigus |
| Dusa | Akumid | Kasear | Anakod |
| Parsi | Daangilu | Nulisud | Kakadan |

Vland: Subsector Key

**Answerin/Parsi** (0431 B-584A85-F): The culture of Answerin holds fear of any kind to be a disease of the mind, and Answerin's psychiatrists have succeeded in eradicating all anxiety from the populace. The principal diagnostic tool for this is a portable device which detects anxiety, by analyzing brain waves and autonomic physiological responses. The device's use borders too closely on psionic practices to allow it free export to the rest of the Imperium, but illegal copies are sometimes smuggled out. Mercenaries from Answerin command premium prices for service.

*Referee:* When necessary, natives of Answerin can produce an adrenalin reaction in their bodies, which gives them temporary superhuman strength and stamina. When refereeing an Answerin mercenary in combat, allow him to increase any single physical characteristic to F for four combat rounds, after which all three physical characteristics are reduced to two for a period of 1D hours, during which time the character must rest and eat. In a surprise situation, an Answerin native has a -2 DM for his surprise roll, because of the need to consciously decide to react strongly.

**Dusa Subsector:** Has no subsector government of its own. Its widely scattered planets are administered from adjoining areas The same is true of the Lalaki Kharir subsector. The rift planets were colonized only recently and the Imperium has not thought it necessary to change the status quo.

**Gamgilebo/ Vhodan** (1604 B-000756-A): This system is under intense study from a team of Scout astrophysicists. Although listed as a trinary with asteroids and a gas giant, the gas giant is a supergiant with a fairly large amount of internal fusion. Studies done over the last three hundred and twenty years indicate that this planet has reached a critical size and mass and may be on the verge of becoming a fourth star. The asteroid miners, already coping with eccentric freeze-or-fry orbits, are viewing this possibility with less than enthusiasm.

**Giinam/Vland** (1915 C-265003-C): Giinam is a hunting preserve, maintained only for Imperial nobles. The tech level refers to the accommodations available at the lodge; the rest of the planet is wilderness and ocean. The planet has a standard atmosphere, despite its small size, because of the planet's high density. The nobles are sitting on a fortune in heavy metals here, but have refused to let the world be exploited since this would ruin the hunting.

**Gokodeyo/Vhodan** (0930 E-5818AA-3): Only three pre-industrial worlds are to be found in the Vland sector, so pervasive is Imperial culture. This is one

of them. Lack of usable water is the primary limitation to industrialization, but the planet is also scarce in other resources. The planet is dense, but its metals are buried in the core; its crust is tectonically stable and does not recycle by way of volcanoes. The large population cannot afford to trade for offplanet technology because their home world produces so little of value.

**Ilma/Akumid** (1523 D-510044-4): Ilma is a museum world of the vanished Qiceteu civilization. Six curators maintain the beautiful ruins of the tech level 4 civilization that died out when the planet's ecology was destroyed by a celestial catastrophe.

**Irila /Vland** (2211 B-568003-9) : Irila is a park planet, boasting beautiful natural scenery and animal life totally unafraid of humans. It was bought outright by a conservation society of the First Imperium and the charter passed into Sharurshid's hands unchanged. Although it is now operated for profit, it is maintained as naturally as possible.

**Khankari/Voskhod** (0205 B-885311-D): When the wind blows on Khankari, you notice. The dense atmosphere carries enormous kinetic energy, and serves to distribute heat from the tropics to the poles. Khankari's sharp axial tilt and short year (in the inner orbit around a cool star) contribute to abrupt seasonal changes and generate some of the sector's most dramatic weather. Hurricanes wiped out the first colony planted here and decimated the population repeatedly thereafter. The small group now living there uses well-reinforced homes, often underground.

**Liwar/Vhodan** (1110 C-350000-A): An automated refueling station serves travellers here on an otherwise useless planet. Standard Imperial bank cards and actual currency are both acceptable to the machines. The machines are serviced by a hermit, who avoids any contact with visitors. Most vessels do not delay at the refueling station any longer than necessary.

**Lukham/Daanglilu** (1334 A-464ABE-G): After replacing Khir Lowe against popular sentiment, Ursheam Khushii, a military dictator, imposed extremely rigorous laws on Lukham. The aim of the takeover was to control the gravitics industry of the world, which specializes in ultraminiaturization. Force has proved no substitute for willing brains, however. Lukham's products have become shoddy and her share of the market is falling off sharply.

The current leader, Khuushmin, the son of Khushii, maintains a high lifestyle by taking a greater cut of the dwindling profits. Public sentiment would favor his overthrow if it could be safely accomplished, but this would be difficult from inside because of the oppressive restrictions on weapons.

Complicating this situation is Khir Lowe's son, who lives with a handful of followers in political exile in the rings of the system's gas giant. Khuushmin can not do away with him, because of the popularity Lowe still holds on Lukham. But Lowe in his present habitation is powerless to act against Khuushmin, whose troops regularly patrol the gas giant. Khir Lowe was known for his generosity; if his son shares these attributes, it is likely that he would reward his rescuers.

**Nulisud/Nulisud** (1937 A-8D366A-F): Four million people crowd Nulisud's highlands above three kilometers altitude. The atmosphere's high concentration of oxygen prevents efficient settlement of low-lying regions. Unfortunately, the soil in the highlands is poor and little mining can be done, but Nulisud survives as

the subsector capital and a trade center. It has one of the best starports in its area of space.

**Shabii/Anarsi** (2408 B-854010-A) : This is a warehouse planet for Makhidkarun, the prosperous Imperial megacorporation. Much of the surface is covered with mechanized storage units and landing areas for transport.

**Sikilar/Vhodan** (1107 B-3328DH-9) : Colonized during the First Imperium with a dome ecology, Sikilar was a popular retirement world because of its low gravity. As the Long Night deepened it was cut off completely from interstellar contact. The domes were maintained by rote knowledge but their atmosphere became thinner over the centuries and the population adapted to it physically.

Technology became the province of a special class for a time. Then came an adventurer from a higher tech world with plenty of ambition and few scruples. Dhusa (the only name now remembered) overawed the populace with his "magic" and set up a religious dictatorship. Since then his priestly caste has instilled a terrified obedience in the people. Offworlders are worshipped as angels. No native may speak to an offworlder without permission. All trade is handled by the priests, who keep technology to themselves.

The only reason the incredible law level of this planet has not made it an amber zone is that offworlders are not subject to the most stringent taboos.

**St. George/Shligus** (2616 B-7C59BB-D): The dominant native animal of St. George is, of course, a "dragon". Lizard-like in appearance but bearing live young, these feisty animals can spit a fluid that catches fire in the hydrogen atmosphere of the planet. The resemblance was too good to pass up for the original colonists, one of whom fancied himself an expert on ancient Terran legends. It was not colonized until 360, when technology to overcome its atmosphere was developed.

The original, highly esteemed leaders set up an almost dictatorial government but their replacements have lost the confidence of the people and there is considerable unrest. Many areas are under martial law. The kesternet plant, which grows only on St. George, is an important ingredient of anagathic drugs. Much of the population of the system is housed in orbital complexes, safe from the insidious hydrogen atmosphere.

**Vilani Main:** The Vilani Main, one of the largest chains of jump-1 worlds in the Imperium, is the oldest, richest, and most cohesive section of the old empire. Few of its worlds gave up interstellar travel during the Long Night. Almost two-thirds of the planets in the Vland sector can be reached from Vland by a series of one-parsec jumps. Maps produced before the Rule of Man call the Main by its original Vilani name, *Arshukaa Sagalaa*.

**Wimorel/ Anakod** (3129 C-765443-7): This Ancient site has only a few ruins attributable to the Ancients, but it has a great many ruins of a stone age culture that apparently coexisted with the Ancients, under their protection, and who shared their fate in the final war. It has been hypothesized that the Ancients looked on these primitives as a sort of pet. The current inhabitants are not the descendants of that race, but of animals that were near intelligence when their superior competition was wiped out. Their numbers are rather small but the Kolzar are inventive and determined. They are roughly humanoid, but have scaly skins and a low body temperature.

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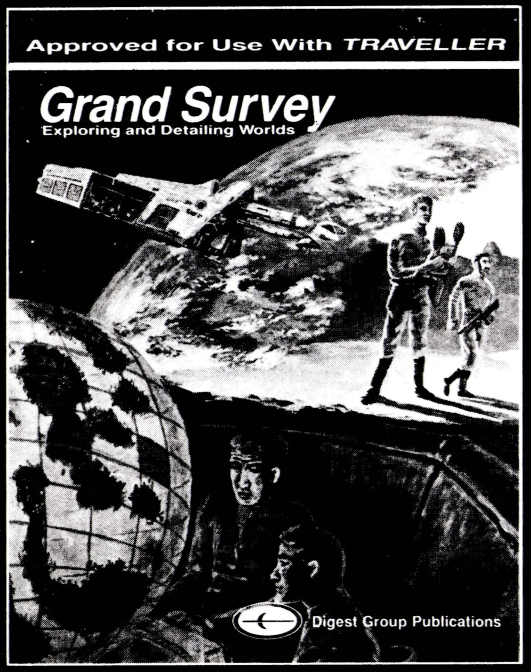


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# The First Imperium

THE GRAND VILANI EMPIRE OF THE STARS —by Marc W. Miller

Vilani humans originated in the relatively large sample of Terran humans which the Ancients carried to Vland. For the few hundred years that the Ancients maintained a colony on Vland, their humans thrived quite nicely. The world was hospitable; their Ancient masters were not overly cruel or capricious. Humans on Vland were put to many different uses: some were simple servants; others became part of genetic tailoring experiments; still others were educated or trained for various occupations within the local economy.

Inevitably, some of the humans proved unsuited for any of the available occupations; these surplus people were assigned a reservation outside the main base areas and left to fend for themselves. From the reservation, Ancients had a renewable source of specimens for their many experiments and jobs; employed humans had a source of mates and a community to join after their usefulness to the Ancients had ended.

The world of Vland, while possessed of a hospitable environment, boasted an alien ecology based on its own independently evolved biology. That biology produced basic proteins, sugars, and amino acids that were difficult for humans to digest and metabolize; local plant and animal life were different enough that humans could not use them for food. Originally, the Ancients produced food for their humans using processors that could convert the basic structure of raw food into acceptable forms. However, such a system was not practical for the humans on the reservations, and an alternative was developed.

One of the oldest occupations in Vilani society is that of *shugilii* (which translates roughly as *miller*). The shugilii was a person who could transform raw food into edible food. Such a task was independent of cooks, and was similar in some ways to a shaman or witch doctor. The original technique involved the grinding of grain, an aging process that allowed some large organic chains to break down, and then a further treatment with acid. Ultimately, shugiliis learned hundreds of techniques—they could mix acids, alkalis, or common minerals with raw food; they could cook, boil, or steam it; they could strip out poisonous parts; they could ferment, season, or age it. Once given a few basic techniques by the Ancients, the shugiliis were able to look for and test other techniques. Since

virtually no food on Vland was edible without some treatment, shugiliis were powerful members of society.

It is important to remember that the alienness of Vilani life made humans a reciprocally unattractive source of food; large predators found human flesh unpalatable (if not simply poisonous), parasites died as they found humans provided no nutrition, bacteria could not infect the human system, and even viruses were unable to invade and take over human cells. Consequently, the primitive human society found no need for its primitive witch doctors and medically-oriented shamans. Shugiliis, however, were essential to Vilani society. They enabled it to survive when the Final War came.

Through various quirks of fate, the Final War came late to Vland. At first, the war ignored Vland; its bases and compounds were operated by Ssoyrdelditsu, a son of Yaskoydray who wanted to remain neutral in the conflict between sons and father. The other sons left Ssoyrdelditsu alone and Yaskoydray had higher priority targets to deal with. Later, Ssoyrdelditsu joined forces with Yaskoydray against the other sons, and it was through their action that Vland was devastated. Ssoyrdelditsu, by the time of the attack, had evacuated most of his equipment and personnel from Vland; he had also released his human servants and scattered the humans of Vland to its several continents, hiding them in remote mountain valleys. Ssoyrdelditsu was killed in the last years of the Final War, but his faction (which supported Yaskoydray) was awarded a world in Yaskoydray's pocket universe when he retreated from the universe we occupy.

The devastation of Vland did not stop with the end of the Final War. Ssoyrdelditsu and his brothers deployed automated war machines (some were

**THE VILANI LANGUAGE**

The language of the Vilani was long the interstellar language of diplomacy and trade within the territory of the First Imperium. With the victories of the Terrans and the rise of the Second Empire, it was largely supplanted by Anglic. However, Vilani remains in use by many ethnically proud populations, and is still commonly encountered in personal, corporate, and world names.

Vilani word structure is essentially Germanic—many component words or syllables are strung together to create a larger, more specific word. Sirka is star or stars and naa means one or united; thus Naasirka is Star Monopoly; Ziru Sirka is Grand Empire of Stars. Shugilii is miller, food preparer, food processor (all in the uniquely Vilani sense); Shiishuginsa is the name of an old and noble Vilani family which was originally a member of the shugilii families. Karun means noble (noun or verb); Makhidkarun is Noble Enterprise (or Enterprise of Nobles); Ishimkarun is shadow emperor; Karunii is vice-noble, or petit emperor. Sharurshid is a now archaic word for limited liability corporation.

Igsiirdi originally meant forum or council. Each bureau elected or selected representatives to serve on the Igsiirdi; it was from the Igsiirdi that the new Emperor was elected, so serving on the Igsiirdi was a powerful and potentially very powerful position. Eventually, membership in the Igsiirdi became hereditary. Note in Library Data (A-M) that 13% of Naasirka is still held by the Igsiirdi family—descendants of the original Igsiirdi.

robots; others were immense juggernauts; still others were immobile self-reproducing installations) on the continents and under the seas of Vland. For two hundred thousand years after the Ancients left Vland, their robot surrogates continued to fight the battles of the Final War. As the battle machines wore out, the battles ground to a halt and the humans of Vland emerged from their mountain valleys to explore their world.

Vilani legends are full of accounts of the wars of the gods, terrible destruction, and occasional intervention in human affairs by the gods. Early explorers encountered still-functioning robots and brought back tales of immense power and knowledge that could be found in the Land of Gods' Wars. It was the search for these robots and their installations that drove the first great explorations of Vland. Occasional empires were founded on the power of just one juggernaut; vast fortunes were made programming a simple installation to manufacture steel-bladed swords and spearheads. However, installations, juggernauts, and robot warriors must eventually run down, and by -20,000 they were the true stuff of legends. Their effects had always been magic, and it took another ten thousand years for a renaissance to bring the Vilani the science which would allow them to do things for themselves.

It is also important to remember that the Vilani had no contact with the Ancients once Ssoyrdelditsu left. As a result, the Vilani saw the robots and juggernauts who fought on Vland (rather than the Ancients) as gods. The very dim racial memory of the Ancients disappeared long before the Vilani emerged from their mountain valleys to explore their world.

A true flowering of Vilani culture began in about -11,000 and over the next thousand years technology was improved to the point that the Vilani could leave their planet and travel through space.

## VILANI SOCIETY

Vilani society (prior to the technological strides of the flowering of -11,000) was dominated by three major forces: the aristocrats, the shugiliis, and the merchants. Aristocrats were the natural leaders of society, typically hereditary, but open enough to allow new blood to rise to the top. Shugiliis were the all important food processors; they had established their craft through the ages into a semi-religious monopoly which controlled the availability of processed food. They never allowed their craft to be converted into food service or restaurant work. Farmers sold their food to the shugiliis, or had it processed for a fee. Merchants, innkeepers, and governments bought processed food from the shugiliis, but all were subject to the prices and controls of the shugiliis' monopoly. Merchants controlled all other trade, although they rose and fell with the marketplace.

With the flowering and its attendant industrial revolution, each of the three forces in society gained more power rather than lost it. Each was already a strong, wealthy force, and each participated in the creation of the industrialized wealth of Vilani nations.

## THE VILANI MOVE INTO SPACE

The first Vilani space explorations took place in -10,011, and within a

**THE MEGACORPORATIONS**

There are five undeniably Vilani megacorporations still in existence as of 1110. Three (Makhidkarun, Naasirka, and Sharurshid) are the lineal descendants of the First Empire bureaux; the others have a varied history.

Zirunkariish (engaged primarily in banking, investments, and insurance) was established during the Long Night (about -475) by the Shiisguginsa family and was a major source of funds for Cleon's campaign to create the Third Imperium. A careful examination of its shareholders shows that it is closely tied not only to the Emperor and various noble families, but also to Sharurshid. Essentially, Zirunkariish is an offshoot or a step-brother of Sharurshid, established in support of a potential interstellar government which ultimately succeeded.

Tukera Lines, LIC (primarily a transport company) was originally a family enterprise which built on its own success. The company began as a partnership between a Vilani noble and a Solomani merchant; after several years of success, they married and their family continued the corporation's activities. Tukera does not directly trace its lineage to any of the Vilani bureaux.

hundred years scientific bases had been established on other worlds in the Vland system. They proved to be extremely disappointing, however, and the Vilani set their sights on their stellar neighbors, soon launching sublight expeditions to other nearby stars. Such sublight expeditions were capable of achieving about 0.1 lights, making a one parsec journey nearly 32 years in duration. Within 500 years, there was a small Vilani community of about six star systems, each boasting its own colonies and scientific stations. Exploration to greater distances was undertaken, but because they were the work of a lifetime, they remained haphazard and temporary.

That changed in -9310 when an expedition to Tahaver discovered intelligent life. The Tahavi, a race of aquatic mantas, at least proved that there was other intelligent life in the universe. Soon thereafter, a colonial expedition to Khula found archeological evidence of a prior human civilization, one which died out some thousands of years before.

Tantalized by the prospects of other intelligent races out among the stars, the Vilani prepared additional sublight expeditions.

In -9235, the Vilani made their ultimate breakthrough—the one that would assure their ascendance for the next six thousand years. A research team working on the fringes of the Vland system created the first working prototype of the jump drive and demonstrated its effects. It opened up the universe to the Vilani. Within ten years, Vilani ships had been built and sent out to all systems within twenty parsecs.

Their discoveries were amazing.

Expecting to find intelligent races, they were still surprised to find so many. And expecting to find humans, they were still surprised to find so many of them. The races they met were equally surprised. None had even an inkling that a jump drive was possible, and gladly embraced the Vilani who brought such a wonderful treasure to them.

But that treasure had a price. The Vilani imposed an interstellar economic

community on all of the worlds they encountered. With the Vilani as the dominant power within the community, it was able to impose Vilani culture and law on the other races among the stars. As a practical matter, however, the subject races made few objections: their rewards were far too great.

## THE RISE OF THE BUREAUX

As their sphere of influence was expanding, the Vilani found it difficult to maintain control across such great distances. At the same time, each of the three power classes of Vilani society found iitself threatened from the forces around it. The aristocracy was threatened by the ruling classes of other worlds; the merchants were threatened by the merchants of other worlds; the shugiliis were threatened by the existence of non-Vilani sources of food. All three sought greater power and arrived at a solution which would give it to them.

Three bureaux were established, each independent of the other two, and assigned a territory among the stars to which only it had exclusive rights. Within that territory, a bureau was an interstellar government, with rights of taxation, defense, and legislation. Each was responsible to a central ruling council which nominally ruled Vland, but practically served only as a forum for the three bureaux to interact.

Each of the three bureaux was effectively identical, but they initially espoused different philosophies based on their origins. Sharurshid, originating with the merchant class, emphasized interstellar trade. Makhidkarun, originating with the aristocracy, emphasized interstellar government. Naasirka, originating with the shugiliis, floundered after it found that it could not control food supplies on most of the worlds it dealt with, but ultimately became a broad-line organization which emphasized monopolies of power, transport, and luxury goods.

Above the three bureaux, which became increasingly similar over the centuries, was the Igsiirdi, the forum which coordinated discussions and resolved differences between the bureaux. The Igsiirdi received tribute (or taxation) payments from the bureaux and used them to administer public works on Vland. It also allocated new territories to the bureaux as they were discovered; the essential fairness of such assignments was encouraged by the fact that the three bureaux themselves appointed members of the Igsiirdi.

In many ways, the bureaux were similar to governmentally chartered companies of Terra: the East India Company or the Hudson's Bay Company, for example. They were complete governments within their territory, operated for a profit, but with assigned responsibilities for the welfare of their citizens, defense of their territory, and control of their subjects.

The bureaux maintained their own governments within their territories. They maintained fleets to protect their shipping and their worlds. They maintained armies to protect their installations and to conquer new worlds when necessary. The three bureaux also established mutual assistance agreements so that they could call on each other when they needed help or reinforcement.

## THE FOUNDING OF AN EMPIRE

The Vilani sphere reached a rough radius of 60 parsecs by about -6000.

Many of the races which the Vilani had contacted then explored even farther, extending the availability of the jump drive to other cultures which were not indebted to the Vilani for its invention. When the Vilani ultimately arrived and tried to impose their culture and trade community, they met resistance.

The initial jump drive discovered by the Vilani was capable of jump-1: one parsec per week. In -5430, Vilani scientists developed the jump-2 drive. No other culture had such a powerful drive, and the Vilani immediately turned their discovery to their own advantage. The jump-2 drive remained a Vilani monopoly, jealously guarded and kept from all subject races. Beginning in -5400, a series of wars to subjugate the resisting fringe cultures was waged. This period of the Consolidation Wars lasted until about -4045, and allowed the Vilani to impose their government and culture on the many worlds between the Great and Lesser Rifts. With Consolidation, there was also a marked change in the texture of Vilani society.

In -5273, the Igsiirdi was formalized as the governing council of Vland and of the entire Vilani trade sphere. The Igsiirdi directed the courses of the Consolidation Wars, managed the absorption of the conquered states, and distributed the conquered territories to the bureaux.

In -4045, with the end of the last Consolidation War, the Igsiirdi declared the establishment of an interstellar empire to govern all of Vilani territory. It was named the Ziru Sirka, the Grand Empire of Stars. The Vilani Imperial calendar also starts from this date.

At first, the Empire had no emperor. Within ten years, the chairman of the Igsiirdi (elected for life by the council) was the Ishimkarun—the Shadow Emperor—ruling through published proclamations, but never appearing in public. The chairmen of the bureaux were Karunii—Petit Emperors, although each was supreme within his or her bureau.

In -3610, the Shadow Emperor became the Emperor of the Stars, the absolute monarch of the Empire. Successors were elected from the Igsiirdi upon the death of the old emperor.

The peace heralded by the establishment of the Grand Empire of Stars had

**REFERRING TO THE EMPIRES**

Through the millennia, the terms used to refer to the empires has changed. The following is a guide.

*The First Imperium.* The Vilani name was Ziru Sirka and translated as Grand Empire of Stars. More commonly, it was just called the Empire or the Imperium. Not until it fell and was succeeded by the Terran's Second Empire was it necessary to distinguish it with a number. Later historians have also called it the Vilani Empire.

*The Second Imperium.* The successor to the First Imperium could naturally enough be called the Second Imperium. Its own name for itself was the Rule of Man; detractors called it the Ramshackle Empire.

*The Third Imperium.* The Sylean Federation transformed itself into the Third Imperium by proclamation. The act of assuming the number three gave that government a legitimacy that it could not gain with a name like Sylean Empire. There is no other official name for the Third Imperium.

great potential. For nearly 1,200 years the Pax Vilanica kept the peace among its star-spanning population. At its height (circa -3500), the Grand Empire of Stars contained 27 sectors and more than 15,000 systems. Peace and centralized rule, however, had its price. The empire insisted on cultural rigidity. Exploration was stopped by -4000. Scientific research was controlled and then stopped soon thereafter. Hereditary positions became commonplace in all three bureaux.

For a while, there was no exterior threat to menace the peace of the empire, but inevitably technology leaked across the borders and was used to challenge Vilani superiority. Where it could, the Vilani used diplomacy to play one menace off against the other, but there was still territorial shrinkage over the centuries. Many threats pushed at many different places along the border. Some were successful in carving out small portions of the empire, others were crushed by imperial reactions. Insurrections, mutinies, and civil wars became increasingly common. The texture of Vilani culture was decaying.

## CONTACT WITH THE SOLOMANI

The beginning of the end of the Grand Empire of Stars was signalled by contact with the Terrans in -2422. The key was the fact that the Terrans contacted the Empire, rather than the other way around. Not only had Terra invented its own jump-drive, they had progressed to jump-2 within only a few years. By -2408, the Terrans and the Empire were at war; by -2219, the Terrans were marching down the streets of Vland as conquerors,and the Grand Empire of Stars was at an end.•

## OTHER REFERENCES

The following materials have some bearing on the First Imperium and the Vilani.

*Droyne,* Alien Module 5.

*Imperium.* The game established some ideas as to what one could expect in the First Imperium (emperors, occasional civil wars, etc) that are reflected in this essay. At the same time, it demonstrates that the Imperium did not have better than jump-2 at the time of its collapse.

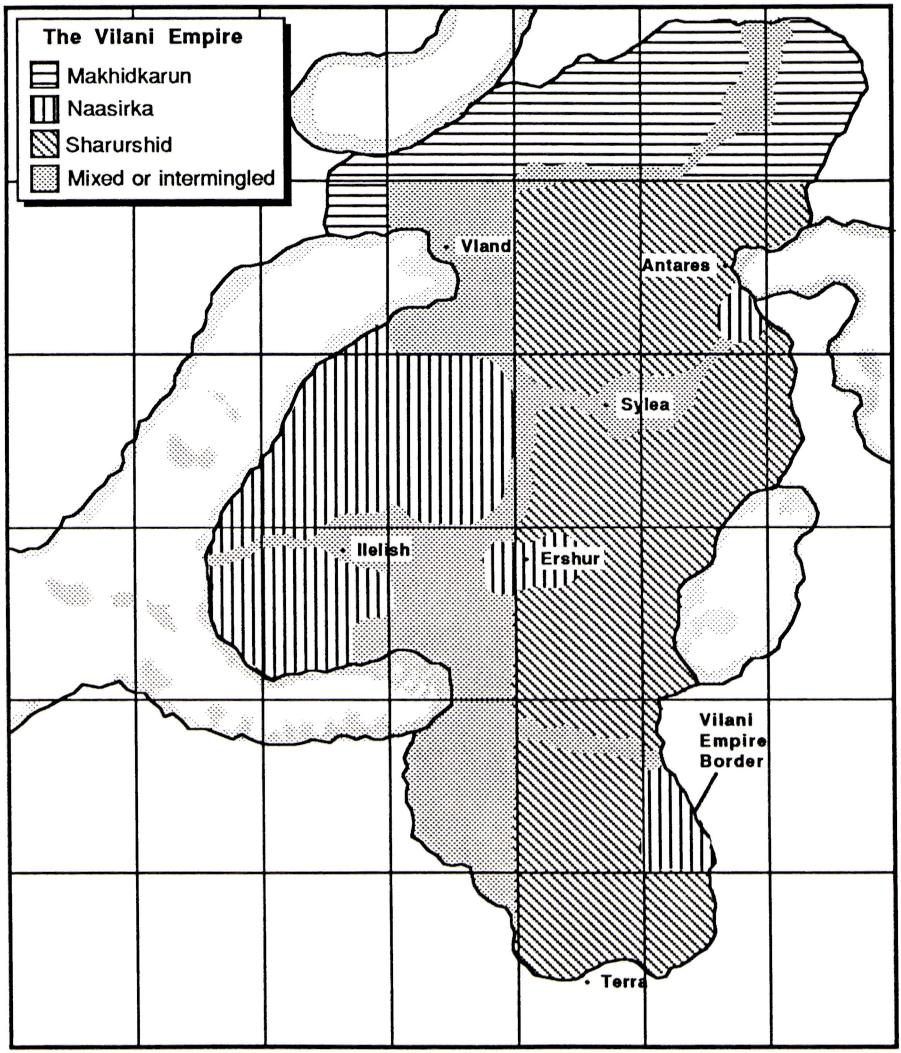
*Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society, No. 17.* The issue covers Vilani word generation; where names given here don't match the system, it is because of archaic or dialectic usage.

*Library Data (A-M).*

*Library Data (N-Z).*

*Research Station Gamma,* Adventure 2. Note that the Vilani settlers of Vanejen (in the Spinward Marches) were refugees from the First Empire after (or as) it fell to the Terrans.

*Secret of the Ancients,* Adventure 12.




# The First Imperium at its Height (circa -3500)

# Vland Subsector

The history of the Vland subsector (subsector G of the Vland sector) is a history of the Imperiums. Vland, homeworld to the Vilani major race of humans, reigned as the capitol world of the old First Imperium for over 2000 years. Later, Vland served as a capitol in the Second Imperium. Today, in the Third Imperium, Vland shines as a prominent center of culture and history; tourist traffic to the world is heavy.

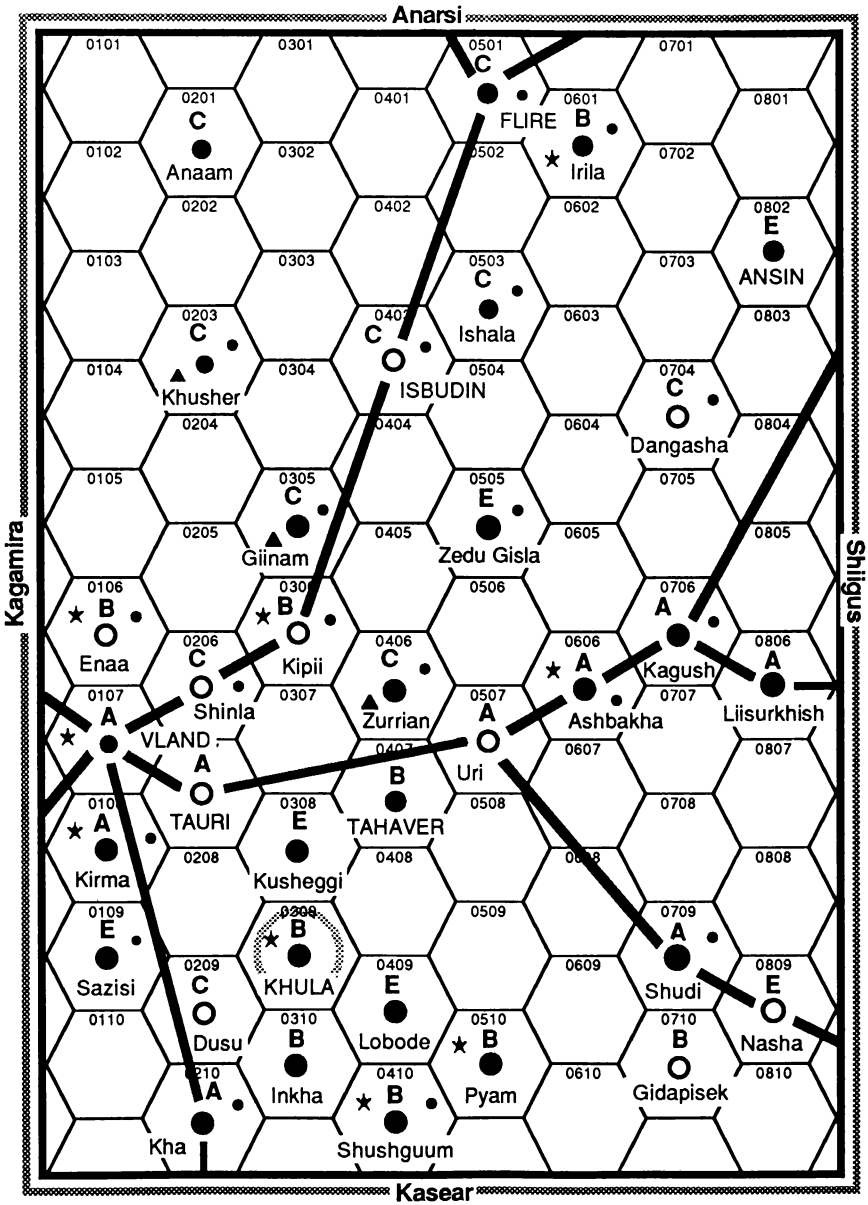
Tauri, a mere 2.17 light years from Vland, was the first system visited by the old Vilani sub-light ships nearly 10,000 years ago. Today, Tauri is a center of banking and commerce.

Ashbakha was deserted during the Long Night. In the early years of the Third Imperium the old First Imperium era starport complex on Ashbakha was completely restored by a wealthy noble and opened to tourists. A multitude of problems forced the starport to be closed after a few centuries. It is estimated that several billion credits are needed to repair the exterior of dozens of buildings in the vast complex. While technically still in operational condition, the starport has remained deserted to this day.

The Vland subsector is heavily populated and exhibits a very high level of technology.

| *Name* | *Location* | *UPP* | *Bases* | *Remarks* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enaa | 0106 | B300859 A | N | NonAg. Vacuum world. | G |
| Vland | 0107 | A967A9A F | N | Subsector capital. | |
| Kirma | 0108 | A797111 F | | NonInd. | G |
| Sazisi | 0109 | E586620 8 | | Agricultural. NonInd. | G |
| Anaam | 0201 | C424753 D | | | |
| Khusher | 0203 | C6A6754 B | S | | G |
| Shinia | 0206 | C1608A9 B | N | Desert world. | G |
| Tauri | 0207 | A130998 E | | NonAg. Poor . Desert world. | |
| Dusu | 0209 | C9E2487 9 | | NonInd. | |
| Kha | 0210 | A86A542 C | | NonInd. Water world. | G |
| Giinam | 0305 | C265003 C | S | NonInd. | G |
| Kipii | 0306 | B130222 F | N | NonInd. Poor. Desert world. | G |
| Kusheggi | 0308 | E496778 4 | | Agricultural. | |
| Khula | 0309 | B475977 F | N | Industrial. | A |
| Inkha | 0310 | B797442 C | | NonInd. | |
| Isbudin | 0403 | C9C5984 C | | | G |
| Zurrian | 0406 | C736300 9 | S | NonInd. | G |
| Tahaver | 0407 | B769978 A | | | |
| Lobode | 0409 | E554566 4 | | Agricultural. NonInd. | |
| Shushguum | 0410 | B522577 A | N | NonInd. Poor. | G |
| Flire | 0501 | C779A77 F | | Industrial. | G |
| Ishala | 0503 | C866651 B | S | Agricultural. NonInd. Rich. | G |
| Zedu Gisla | 0505 | E533587 5 | | NonInd. Poor. | G |
| Uri | 0507 | A313632 D | | NonAg. NonInd. Ice-capped. | |
| Pyam | 0510 | B799385 B | N | NonInd. | |
| Irila | 0601 | B568003 9 | N | NonInd. | G |
| Ashbakha | 0606 | A672000 A | N | NonInd. | G |
| Dangasha | 0704 | C350664 B | N | NonInd. Poor. Desert world. | G |
| Kagush | 0706 | A463436 F | | NonInd. | G |
| Shudi | 0709 | A7668BB 9 | | | G |
| Gidapisek | 0710 | B200623 D | | NonAg. NonInd. Vacuum world. | |
| Ansin | 0802 | E563A95 C | | | |
| Liisurkhish | 0806 | A362688 B | | NonInd. Rich. | |
| Nasha | 0809 | E200001 8 | | NonInd. Vacuum world. | |

The Vland subsector contains 34 worlds with a total population of 164.206 billion. The highest population is 82.7 billion at Ansin; the highest tech level is F at Vland, Kirma, Kipii, Khula, Flire, and Kagush. All worlds are members of the Imperium.




# The Vland Subsector

## Subsector G of the Vland Sector

# Playing In Character

## EFFECTIVE ROLE PLAYING

—by Henry E. Neufeld

Consider the following scene:

Jim Altman and Mary Smith (a pirate and a doctor, respectively) are sitting in the Spaceman's Bar on Regina. They are not too sure why they are there, but we'll leave that aside for the moment. Jim and Mary dislike each other on sight, but nonetheless sit together and order drinks, as they are the only people in the bar, and it would look very silly for them to sit on opposite sides of the room. Besides, they are player characters, so they must get together.

As they are sitting there together, having exchanged names (but nothing more) a loud voice booms down from the ceiling. "Our adventure for today will be rescuing the daughter of a shipping magnate who has been kidnapped by some pirates." Jim and Mary look up immediately with interest. An adventure! Right here in the Spaceman's Bar! Just what they were looking for!

"What character type are you, Jim?" asks Mary, forgetting what she thinks of the burly, unwashed spaceman.

Resisting the impulse (he is a good player) to respond, "Italic type," Jim says, "I'm a pirate."

"Oh, isn't that wonderful," says Mary, consulting *Citizens of the Imperium.* "Pirates are individuals who make their living by attacking, hijacking, or plundering commerce. By the way, what's your strength bonus for brawling?"

"Plus 1, unless I have weakened blows, in which case it's reduced to minus 2," responds Jim, consulting his character sheet. "What do you do for a living?"

"I'm a doctor and I have body pistol-4," says Mary, opening her purse and showing the aforementioned pistol.

"Good," says Jim, "let's go and rescue the maiden in distress."

At which time the referee says, "You hear a news bulletin over the radio in

the bar telling you . . . " But the adventure is already under way.

This scene serves to illustrate the biggest problem with role-playing games: players and referees not *role-playing*. Let's look at some suggestions to both players and referees as to how to improve the situation. We will then rewrite the scene.

**When you design a character, make sure you understand some simple facts about that person's background and motivations.** If the referee provides good information to work with on designing your character, then this should be easy to do.

Mary Smith is a doctor. Why did she become a doctor? Was it to save lives, to make money, to please her mother, or something else? If it was to save lives, she should quickly respond to the scenario of the day. If it was to make money, her first reaction might be to ask what sort of reward is offered for the girl's release.

Somewhere in this process, decide why she learned the body pistol to such great accuracy in spite of its being unrelated to her profession. Make your conception detailed enough to let the referee get your character involved.

**Think as your character would think, and talk as your character would talk.** Jim should not be upset at the kidnapping unless that has been built into his character, perhaps as sort of a pirate Robin Hood. Also, unless the Spaceman's Bar is a hangout without law, he should probably not say "pirate" as his profession. Perhaps "free trader" or "mercenary" would be better. Do not be stuck with the limitations of character names given in the rulebook. The characters aren't playing your game.

**Don't ask another character for his skill levels, or rolls required to hit, or any character stats.** You can ask how good the person is. And the answer might be "great", "unbeatable", or any of a number of descriptive terms real people use to describe their abilities. There's no reason, either, why a character might not lie, or have an unrealistic opinion of his own abilities.

**Choose characters for a party as carefully as the person you are playing would.** Why should Mary Smith trust this pirate she has just met? If necessary because of incompatibility, take or create other characters.

**Wait for motivation in character before jumping at an adventure.** In the scene above, the news flash could provide a good opportunity, if it related to motivations of the characters.

In summary, **always think, talk, and act as your character.**

For you referees, the control of the situation is much more in your hands.

Point out the problems and suggestions above to your players, and remind them of them as necessary.

**If possible, have more than one adventure ready.** If not, make sure that the motivations for the one you have prepared are appropriate for the characters who will be going on it.

**Design meeting scenes around things which the characters logically might do,** then create scenes where they can find out about each other.

Don't discuss "today's adventure" until you present it piece by piece in

character to the players. The first mention of the kidnapping should be the news broadcast. This is not an unbendable rule, but should be used if players are unused to staying in character.

**Don't tell the players anything their characters wouldn't know.** Don't allow players to discuss a situation between themselves out of character, then benefit from it as their characters.

Now for a rewrite with [ ] indicating player and referee comments:

Jim Altman is sitting in the Spaceman's Bar, a rather seedy bar, but one which serves Jim's favorite drink. [J: My favorite drink is Zerp Berry Brandy, where do they serve that?]

As he is peaceably sipping on the brandy a fight breaks out in the middle of the room. A big bully is about to beat up a green, young merchant crewman who has made a mistake. [Ref: He looks scared and out of his depth. (Play on the stated character of Jim: he stands up for the underdog.)]

Meanwhile, Mary is walking past the bar, returning from a mission of mercy in the slums. She is carrying her body pistol, which she has learned to use because of the dangers of her job. The young merchant crewman comes flying out of the door, since the bully took action before Jim could move. Jim jumps up and follows. Mary bends down to look at the wounded boy, keeping an eye on the door for approaching trouble.

"Get away from 'im!" says the bully.

Mary slips the pistol out of her purse as he reaches to pull her aside. "I wouldn't do that," she says, holding her aim steady.

About this time, Jim arrives and grabs the bully from behind. "Go ahead and take care of him, lady," he says gruffly, noticing her medical kit. Mary does this competently, watching the struggling bully being held by the scruff of the neck. "Not too clean and mannered, but pretty nice anyway," she is thinking.

"Pretty good," says Jim admiringly when she is finished. "Um," he hesitates, "you wouldn't by any chance care for a drink, would you?"

"In there?" asks Mary, looking at the dirty storefront.

"Well, its not exactly luxury, but they do serve the best Zerp Berry Brandy," says Jim, reddening slightly. "I think you can handle it, and I can take care of you."

"Zerp Berry Brandy?" asks Mary. "What's that?"

"You haven't had any? You must come in and try some. I'll buy!"

"Thanks, I think I will," says Mary. (The referee could use this opportunity to introduce the kid as a non-player character.)

While in the bar drinking, a news announcement comes over the radio. The daughter of Gordon Jameson, shipping magnate, has been kidnapped. "That guy's my worst enemy," mutters Jim under his breath.

"But the poor girl," says Mary.

"Yep, she ain't done nothin' wrong."

"You know," says Mary, "maybe the two of us could do something about it. We seem to have some useful skills; quite a variety between us. By the way, can you pilot a spacecraft?"

"Can I pilot a spacecraft? There ain't no ship I can't handle!"

And the characters are off on an adventure, and this time they know why. •

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## TRAVELLERS' DIGEST ASTROGRAPHIC INDEX FOR ISSUES 1—4

As a service to our readers, we are publishing an "Astrographic Index" to our first four issues. This index lists all the world, subsector, and sector names referenced or mentioned in issues 1 through 4. For your convenience, the subsector name keys from issues 1 and 2 are reprinted above.

Worlds are listed in the index using the following format:

world name/subsector name/sector name

For example, the world Efate in the Regina subsector of the Spinward Marches sector is listed as:

Efate/Regina/Spinward Marches

References to subsectors and sectors rather than individual worlds are indicated by the word (subsector) or (sector) after the name.

The issue number precedes page references. Following the issue number is a semi-colon and the specific pages in that issue to reference.

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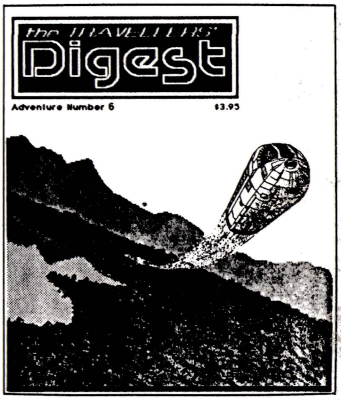


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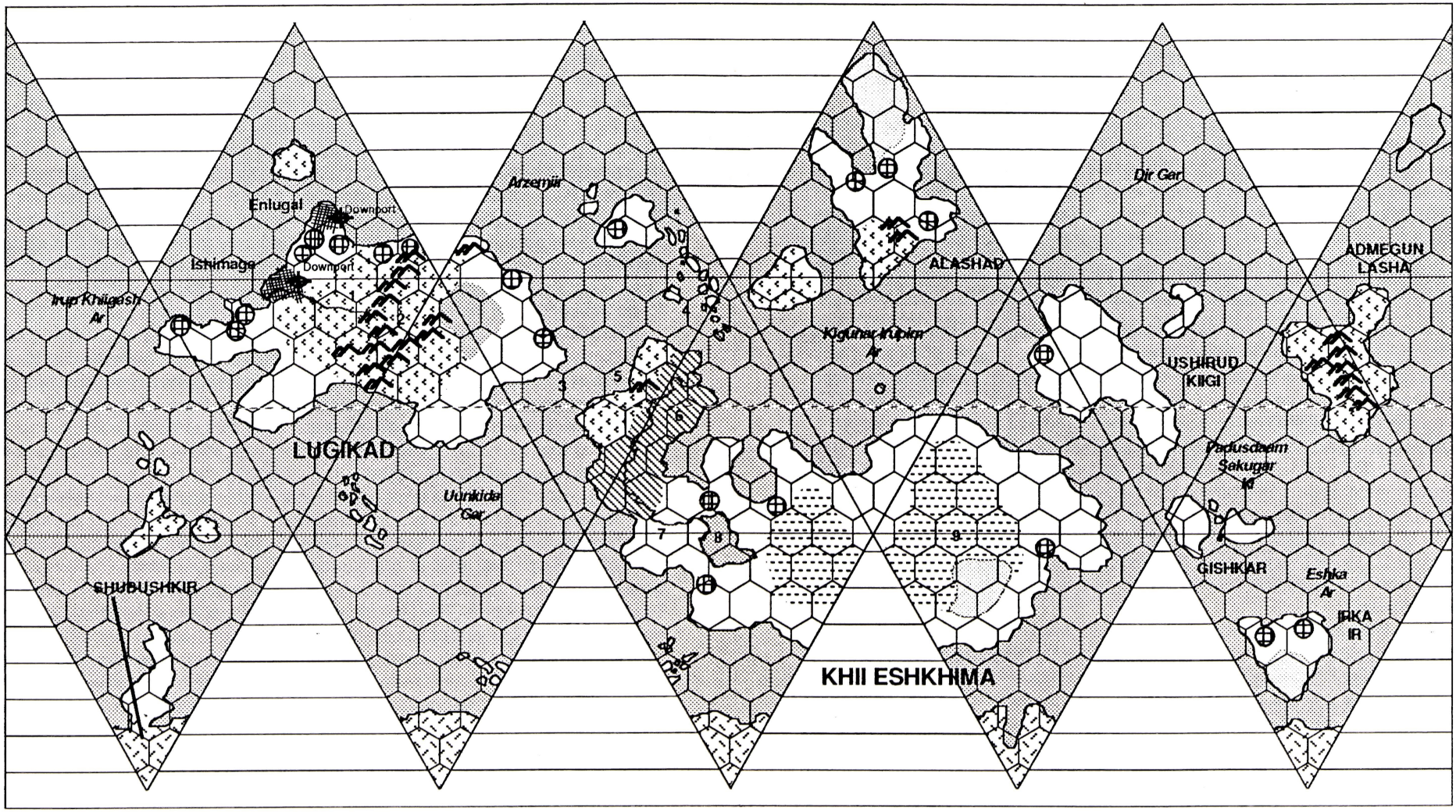


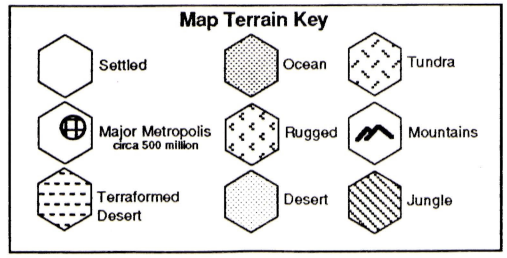


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